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**LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH MONTHLY OF J&K**  
*A News Magazine of Kashmiri Pandit Community*

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# *Kashmir Sentinel*

**February 2003**

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## **1 Centenary Occasion**

Kashmir Sentinel, with this issue is hundred issues old. For a journal, which survives on limited resources and enjoys a highly committed readership, it is a great moment. The idea to start this paper was born out of a realisation that the regional and the national press were giving a short shrift to the deprivations and problems of displaced Kashmiris.

The separatists in the Valley had ganged up with influential members in the Indian media and the civil society to indulge in disinformation on real reasons for Pandits' ethnic-cleansing, their deprivations in exile and on the issue of eventual return to homeland. These vested interests floated many myths about Kashmiri Muslim alienation and on the desired solutions. The purpose was to confuse the national opinion, keep the national focus blurred and lastly, to derail Central government's policy on Kashmir and Kashmiri Pandits.

Sensitive Indians and Kashmiri Pandits had deluge of disinformation to counter. Also, the exile breaks the resistance of a community. It endangers the physical and cultural survival of the community. There has to be a super-human effort, on the part of its members, to avert this eventuality. Yehudi Amchai, Mehmood Derwesh, Edward Said, all have been great intellectuals only because of their responsible role during exile.

Aware of the responsibilities, Kashmir Sentinel assumed the task of a crusade journal. It fought for the rights of displaced Kashmiris, as never before and boldly countered the disinformation on many issues. It challenged the national discourse on Kashmir and on the genocide of Kashmiri Hindus. Kashmir Sentinel drew the ire of the vested interests but admiration from the patriot. It polarised this schism even deeper. Gradually, Sentinel expanded its profile to cover the issues of regional discrimination, disinformation on Kashmir's history and culture and in-built contradictions in Centre's approach on Kashmir.

Globalisation and the imperatives of sheer survival are breaking down the primordial identities, crafted on the principles of community, caste, ethnicity or region. 'PIsn't Pandits' ethnic-cleansing issue a part of the bigger malaise that threatens Kashmir's survival as a tolerant and pluralist society. Aren't displaced Kashmiris a part of the bigger community, which constitutes the people of J&K. The problems of the border refugees and other unfortunate victims of ethnic-cleansing in Doda and elsewhere have got submerged in other issues. Kashmir Sentinel made some modest attempts to bring the focus on these neglected people.

There are other issues which rivet attention. Every other day stories refer to how ordinary Kashmiris are being hounded out of their homes by the terrorists and slaughtered brutally, on the mere suspicion of being an 'informer' or for standing upto the terrorist diktat. These brave sons of Vitasta stand disowned not only by this great nation but also by the society, to which they immediately belong. Expediency and nation-building cannot go together. Aren't these people fighting India's second battle for freedom, i.e. national consolidation.

Sooner than later, the terrorist disruption is going to end. Priorities will shift to the arduous task of national reconstruction in Kashmir. What will be the future of 'identity politics' in Kashmir, which has fuelled communalism and fundamentalism? How far the Indian state will go in restoring Kashmiri Pandits to their homeland to fulfill its commitment to the nation? Will it bargain the exclusion of the Kashmiri Pandits from Kashmir in return for an elusive peace? What message a 'monocultural society' in Kashmir is going to send elsewhere for nation-building? There will be other problems too--issues of regional discrimination and political re-organisation of the state, future of democracy and industrialisation in agrarian-mercantilist economy of Kashmir, allied issues of corruption, environmental degradation etc.

Kashmir Sentinel has stayed away from the temptations of sensational journalism. Its priority has not been the news but views. Its target is not the casual but committed reader, who is concerned about his country. At times, Sentinel may have taken liberties with the readability aspect, but then the larger concerns have been to build campaign on a vital issue. One hundred issues are enough to announce a verdict on the role of a journal. Whether Kashmir Sentinel has fulfilled its commitments for which it was

launched, it is for its readers to tell. Aren't they, the real moral support, who have kept the going on for Kashmir Sentinel, despite all odds.

## ***2 The whole system has collapsed, says Rafiq Sadiq***

Mr Rafiq Sadiq, vice-president of J&K PCC-I, is a disillusioned man today. His family dominated the state's political scene for nearly five decades, leaving behind a distinct mark on it. He belongs to the old school of politics, where politics meant service for the people and commitment to cherished values. Mr Sadiq believes that politics has degenerated beyond redemption. He is deeply pained by the ongoing turmoil in Kashmir and does not see any immediate end to it. His father, late GM Sadiq ruled the state for eight years from 1964 to 1972. Mr Rafiq Sadiq recently spoke to *Kashmir Sentinel* about men and matters in Kashmir's contemporary history. Excerpts of the interview:

*'Karras' has been a political family. They have remained in the thick of politics both before and after 1947. How was this legacy transmitted to you?*

RS: My grandfather Haji Abdul Gafar Wani and his brother Kh. Ahmedullah Wani were ahead of their times. They were politically conscious people and wanted Kashmiris to walk with their head high. The two were deeply concerned about the self-respect of Kashmiris.

A few year's prior to 1931 agitation there was a famine. Haji Abdul Gafar organised relief-work and at his own cost purchased grains, Karra. He may have organised some protests too. Maharaja's government ordered a 12 cane-charge punishment for him. As our family was a leading merchant family, dealing in Pashmina wool, he was able to influence leading notables of Maharaja. The punishment was condoned. In 1924 on silk-factory strike also, he had composed a poem. He knew Persian well. His *takhlus* was Farik. Later my father and uncle Mohidin were also actively involved in the anti-autocratic movement. Kh. Mohidin was a pioneer in the trade union work in Kashmir. He was the first to organise Municipal Workers' Union.

Later during Quit Kashmir Movement our house became the hub of political activities. Mohidin was chief dictator of the War Council. He remained underground for the entire duration of Quit Kashmir Movement. He was all the time at home only but the police could not locate him. Maharaja's troops would often come at 5 AM, lay a cordon of the locality and then go for searches. When they would leave, children would start drum-beating, to make fun of them. Children would also handle posters. My aunt, Zenab Begum first came in politics through Quit Kashmir Movement and delivered a speech at Khanqah. Two of my father's cousins, Kh. Abdul Rashid Wani and Kh. Ghulam Rasool Wani remained in jail for 18 months during this agitation. They were tortured and later shifted to Hira Nagar and Kathua jails. Politics thus became an integral part of our family. I grew up in this atmosphere.

*KS: Where was Sadiq Sahib during the 'Quit Kashmir agitation'?*

RS: Before the agitation was launched, Sadiq Sahib and Bakshi Sahib had been deputed to Lahore to mobilise the political support. Punjab unit of the Communist Party was a strong unit and father was quite close to the Punjab Communists. They had also to mobilise the press and raise funds from the friends to sustain the agitation in Kashmir. Some families, whose male members were in jails needed urgent financial help. Many NC workers, which included Sham Lal Watt, JN Zutshi, RC Raina, Sri Kanth Raina, Prithvi Nath Raina, Habibullah Zargar (Braroo), Ahsanullah, and others visited Lahore of and on to keep Sadiq Sahib and Bakshi Sahib in touch with the ongoing agitation. Late Dwarka Nath Kachru, who became Private Secretary to Pt. Nehru, would also go to Lahore on behalf of the party. Father returned to Kashmir only after the end of the agitation.

*KS: How was Sadiq Sahib drawn to left politics?*

RS: In 1930, my father went to Lahore to pursue higher studies. There he came in contact with the communist intellectuals. Balraj Sahni, Krishan Chander, Mr IK Gujral etc were all there at that time. After graduation, he went to Aligarh University for LLB. Messers Gh. Mohammad Chicken and Mirza Afzal Beg were his class fellows there. The latter was his room-mate as well. He returned from Aligarh in 1934 and fought elections to the Praja Sabha. He was elected as MLA alongwith Amashah Shahdad, Mirza Afzal Beg and Mian Yar.



*KS: On the eve of accession Sadiq Sahib was deputed to Pakistan to hold talks with Muslim League leadership on State's future. Can you throw some more light as to what sort of discussions took place there?*

RS: I must confess my father never made public the discussions which took place between him and the League leadership. He may have taken some people in confidence. Sadiq Sahib was sent because he had direct access to Mian Iftikharuddin. A former left-leaning Congressman, Mian Iftikharuddin was a senior leader in the League government. Through his good offices, Sadiq Sahib was able to meet Liaqat Ali Khan. The League leadership refused to commit itself on anything. They impressed upon him to bring the entire working committee of National Conference, including Sheikh Abdullah to Pakistan to discuss State's future. Raiders at that time were already in Lahore and were busy looting the people. They had turned into a nuisance. Khan Abdul Qayom Khan wanted to push them forward. A few days later there was tribal raid. Sadiq Sahib returned along with other refugees from Lahore. Pakistan's game-plan was exposed. They were trying to lure NC leadership to Lahore and make them forcibly sign the instrument of accession. I do not know whether Sadiq Sahib kept the record of his Lahore meetings. Our family papers recently got destroyed in a fire incident. Among these were many files of old newspapers.

*KS: What was your family's role during the Tribal Raid?*

RS: As raiders made advances towards the Srinagar city, Pro-Pak elements and other vested interests in the neighbourhood tried to demoralise our family. They would tell our ladies, "Pakistanis are coming and will slaughter you people. It is better you leave Batmaloo." The whole of Srinagar was in turmoil. Male members in the family were involved in organising resistance to the raiders. Our ladies would confront them, saying, "Come what may. We will not leave Batmaloo. We will die here." Political culture had already evolved in our family.

Sadiq Sahib's maternal uncle, Ali Dar was Numberdar of Palhalan. Kh. Ali Dar arranged safe place for keeping the belongings and other valuables of Pt. Kanth Ram and other Pandit families. When the raiders came they threatened Ali Dar and asked him to hand over the valuables Pandits had kept with him. He told them their information was wrong and challenged them, "If you want to kill me I am ready". The Raiders occupied his big house to set up their headquarters. After Pandits returned, he handed them over their belongings.

During the raid Sadiq Sahib was instrumental in creating J&K Militia to push back the raiders. He was appointed its Chief Administrator (Emergency). Freda Bedi, Zenab Begum, Sajida Begum, Krishna Misri, Mehmooda Ali Shah, Jana Begum took active part in Women's militia. Brig. Usman would also come here to help in the training of militia men.

*KS: Sadiq Sahib parted from Sheikh Abdullah in 1953. What were the differences?*

RS: National Conference leadership headed by Sheikh Abdullah was gradually drifting and reneging on its earlier commitments. In 1952, at the behest of Sheikh Abdullah five-six meetings of working committee were held. He asked the working committee members to give their opinion in writing on the feasibility of options--accession to India, accession to Pakistan or independence. Members of the working committee included Maulana Masoodi, Mohiddin Karra, Budh Singh, Sham Lal Saraf, Sofi Mohammad Akbar, Bakshi Gh. Mohammad, GM Sadiq, Mirza Afzal Beg. Some endorsed accession to India. Few supported accession to Pakistan, but majority of the members tried to play safe by maintaining ambiguity. Even Bakshi did not voice his opinion clearly. Sadiq Sahib was the only member, who not only endorsed accession to India but also gave enough reasons to justify it. He plainly told Sheikh Sahib that Indian Army's presence was a reality and only an army can throw it back. Sadiq Sahib added neither he nor Sheikh Abdullah were capable of doing that. He reminded him accession to India was a conscious political decision on the part of National Conference and asked him to strengthen ties between Kashmir and India. Deliberations of the working committee remained inconclusive.

Sheikh Sahib ignored Sadiq Sahib's dissent. Political situation was deteriorating and the NC leadership was following a policy of drift. Sheikh Abdullah's new stance of maintaining ambiguity on accession and

creating doubts against the Centre among the people and NC leadership led to political-uncertainty. This created an opportunity, and Pakistan began fully exploiting the situation.

Then there was Sahyar incident in July 1953. A National Conference meeting had been organised at Nawakadal. It is not clear at whose behest the meeting had been organised. Sheikh Abdullah had been watching the proceedings from a nearby school. When Mohidin Karra asked the audience, "What do you want". 50-60 people got up and said they wanted Pakistan. Mohidin told them he too wanted Pakistan. The people later formed a procession which finally terminated in Civil Lines area. It created commotion in the Valley and the Central leadership was perturbed. The same Mohidin Karra had opposed earlier reconversion of NC into Muslim Conference and scolded my father when he wanted to attend a reception for Jinnah in 1945.

*KS: What was the impact of Sheikh Abdullah's dismissal? Was it avoidable?*

RS: Its impact was disastrous. Majority of the rank and file and the leadership went with Sheikh Abdullah. They went to jail with him. It was only later that many of them were weaned back. The split led to a division among the pro-Indian forces. It took some time to repair the damage. For many days Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad, the new Chief Minister did not dare to come out of his house. For the whole of August it was a curfew like situation. On 16th August, my father organised the first meeting of his committed workers at Grindlays Bank. They had come in a procession from Batyar, Alikadal. This created hope among those who were as yet reluctant to side with the new government. Bakshi had no will to face the situation. Sadiq Sahib and his left group played a crucial role in reversing the situation. There was total polarisation. It was clash between the left and the pro-American elements.

Retrospectively I feel there could have been other ways to deal with the worsening situation. Centre could have shown more patience. Its mission to send Maulana Azad had failed due to cold-shouldering by Sheikh Abdullah. Still there was some scope to persist with the efforts. Sheikh's removal looked like a coup. Internal factional struggle also played a part in forcing the pace of events. I feel it was a hasty decision. Secondly, after the dismissal, where was the need to put him behind the bars for so long. It created hostility among people. Had Sheikh Abdullah been released immediately, he would have lost much of his popularity. We turned him into a hero.

*KS: Launching of Democratic National Conference was a defining moment in Kashmir's contemporary history. It was the first attempt to introduce competitive politics in Kashmir, democratise it and bring people of the Valley closer to national mainstream. How do you look at DNC's role?*

RS: Sadiq Sahib had clarity of political conviction. He was totally opposed to antidemocratic practices and arbitrary governance. Kashmir had no democracy. Freedom and the benefits which people enjoyed under Indian constitution were not available to Kashmiris. Judiciary was state sponsored and judges were appointed by the state government. The financial institutions and the election commission in the state had no accountability because there was no supervisory control of the Central institutions. This hit the common man hard. Rigging in elections crossed all limits. Majority of the candidates could manage uncontested return. State Election Commission had no credibility. Permit system had hit the shawl merchants hard. They had to seek certificate of good conduct from the local halqa president of NC. The merchant would be coerced to sell his merchandise at a throw away price to the halqa president. NC halqas became dens of corruption.

Soon after Sheikh Abdullah's dismissal, Sadiq Sahib and his group began voicing opposition to the corrupt and repressive policies of Bakshi. Concerns of Sadiq Sahib are eloquently reflected in the Sadiq-Bakshi correspondence. The left group stood for a humane governance that carried legitimacy with the people. This inner-party struggle was going on, when distribution of portfolios and the defeat of the official candidate GR Renzu forced Sadiq Sahib and his group to walk out of NC and float DNC.

DNC demanded financial integration, extension of Supreme Court, and labour laws to the state. It also called for abolition of Permit system and bringing State's election commission under the control of Central Election Commission. DNC members in the state assembly vociferously pleaded for these measures. Outside the assembly it built up a strong people's movement to put pressure on the state and the

Central government. It was a people's movement. Kashmiris were demanding the rights enjoyed by other people under the Indian constitution. We were successful. Bakshi was initially hostile but later on yielded under pressure of the democratic movement. The bill to extend central laws was passed in 1962. People reacted very favourably. For closer integration at administration and economic level, political integration was essential. National Conference was rechristened as Congress and nomenclature of Prime Minister and Sadr-e-Riyasat were also changed.

*KS: Sadiq Sahib ruled the state for eight years. What set his administration apart from others?*

RS: He assumed Chief Ministership on February 28, 1964. There were three main elements in his governance. One, he was a liberal democrat, who respected political freedom of others. Soon after he took over he released Sheikh Abdullah and other political prisoners, including Maulana Masoodi, Mohiddin Karra, Mohd. Shafi Qureshi and Maulana Farooq. Hazratbal conspiracy case and other cases were withdrawn and free atmosphere was created. Curbs on the freedom of press were also lifted. Late Shamim Ahmed Shamim launched 'Aina'. It wrote powerful articles against ministers and the government, yet there was no political pressure.

Secondly, Sadiq Sahib had clear vision on the role of bureaucracy. He did not want it to become a law unto itself and favoured its accountability to the political leadership of the government. At the same time he made their authority strong by insulating the officials from local pressures for doing a wrong action. After he took over, he called all the DCs and SPs and issued clear instructions, "Don't tolerate any interference by local MLA. Only leader of the legislature can issue orders." This gave authority to DCs and SPs. It was on the strength of this administration that he could rely to defeat Pakistan's game-plan in 1965. Sadiq Sahib also had great respect for institutions. Once a youngman came weeping to him for redressal of grievances. Sadiq Sahib told him "Males don't weep. You speak with courage. I will try to redress your grievance. If I am unable to do it, you can knock at the doors of the court for justice." Thirdly, Sadiq Sahib made administration responsive to the needs of the people and tried to limit the scope for corruption.

In the wake of Holy Relic Theft agitation, the administration was in shambles. Within a few months he put it back on the rails and restored the authority of the government. It was not a simple task. Shopkeepers replaced the faulty weight measures due to the fear of the government. Feature programme 'Zoonab' was started to get the feedback from the people. Sadiq Sahib himself gave directions to late Som Nath Sadhu to make the programme a link between people and the government. He would listen every morning to 'Zoonab'. People wrote their problems to 'Zoonab' and the programme would highlight these. Immediate remedial action was taken by the administration. 'Zoonab' programme became extremely popular. People felt the impact of administration. Justice was speedy. They appreciated positive political interference. Sadiq Sahib tried to see that honesty values percolated down and succeeded to some extent. As the head of the administration was honest, no official dared to indulge in corruption. Sadiq Sahib never compromised on the issue of corruption or favouritism, even when it involved his ministers.

*KS: How could state government so easily defeat Pakistan's game-plan in 1965?*

RS: There was strong political leadership in the state government which was clear about the tasks. Sadiq Sahib had created an administration that knew its responsibility. JKAP played a commendable role in nabbing Pak saboteurs. Sadiq Sahib's and DP Dhar's sound political leadership made it possible to defeat the Pak game-plan at a very low cost. DP Dhar assumed the task of guiding Indian Army, while Sadiq Sahib worked on the political front. The notable role was played by Mir Lasjan, Rehat Mir, Abdul Ghani Namthali and Mir Mustafa among others. They personally moved with the army as guides and due to this notable successes were achieved.

In 'Operation Gibraltar' Plan, it was the Pak army in civies which had to do the fighting, while Kashmiris had to arrange only food and transport. Sadiq Sahib launched a political campaign to educate people. Late Bansi Parmu organised painting shows. Political rallies were organised to make people aware about the real designs of Pak infiltrators. As a sound administrator Sadiq Sahib ensured that supporters of infiltrators are crushed with a heavy hand. He also did not want to leave any scope for hearsay. He told

the people that if they passed on wrong information based, on hearsay, they will be punished, and rewarded in case they came up with reliable information. This approach worked wonders. There was immediate action because of correct information. Pak infiltrators were eliminated within no time.

Sadiq Sahib during his tenure contested politics of both, Jamaat Islami as well as Plebiscite Front. During his time also Jamaat Islami ran its Darsghahs. He called their leaders and firmly told them to limit the role of these schools to just imparting religious education. Sadiq Sahib did not encourage Jamaat and told its leaders that he will not allow them to spread the poison of fundamentalism. After Sadiq Sahib's death, Syed Ali Shah Geelani delivered a speech highly critical of him in the State Assembly.

Similarly he did not allow politics of Plebiscite Front to go unchallenged. In 1966 Sadiq Sahib decided to hold Panchayat elections. Mirza Afzal Beg threw a challenge that Plebiscite Front would not allow the holding of these elections. Syed Mir Qasim was unnerved. Sadiq Sahib announced, "We will hold elections. Anybody who creates hurdles will be dealt according to law". This silenced the Plebiscite Front. Panchayat elections took place as usual.

By and large the national press took a very positive view of Sadiq Sahib's reign. Initially, Indian Express wrote critical stories but as things settled down, it too wrote positively.

*KS: Can you throw some more light on your father's differences with DP Dhar and Syed Mir Qasim. What was Centre's role in all this?*

RS: Differences and dissent are part of democratic functioning and there is nothing unusual about it. After 1967 Pandit agitation, Sadiq Sahib changed DP Dhar's portfolio from Home to Education. This was not liked by DP Dhar. He called on Sadiq Sahib and told him, "I have served enough in the state. I have a desire to go somewhere as an ambassador". Father asked him if he was speaking from his heart. Dhar Sahib replied in affirmative. Sadiq Sahib talked to Mrs Gandhi and Dhar Sahib was appointed as Indian ambassador to Soviet Union. When orders were issued, DP Dhar developed cold feet but Mrs. Gandhi did not relent.

Syed Mir Qasim is responsible for sowing the seeds of dissidence in Congress. The other disservice he did was to bring Jamaat Islami in the Legislative Assembly. Our own candidates were got defeated. It was a major tactical mistake. Mr Qasim had argued with Centre that India would be on a better footing if Jamaat Islami countered fundamentalist politics of Pakistan in State Assembly. This was a bizarre logic. Due to this alliance Jamaat cadres in large numbers gained entry into Civil Secretariat and other offices. The problem today is with this administration how can you fight the subversive war. Sadiq Sahib and Qasim Sahib often went for morning stroll together. He would try to convince Qasim Sahib about Jamaat's politics and policy of liberalisation.

Differences between Sadiq Sahib and Qasim Sahib cropped up when the latter developed ambitions of replacing Sadiq Sahib. I cannot say with certainty which side Mrs Gandhi supported but CPI's threat on the change put her on guard. When dissidents went to meet her in Delhi, she told them, "the question of the change of leadership would be decided inside the Congress Legislature Party and in J&K". Sadiq Sahib also conveyed his unhappiness to Mrs. Gandhi when Plebiscite Front leaders were externed in 1969. He told her, "you did not ask me. Sheikh Abdullah had to come here. I could deal with him here".

*KS: Was 1975 Indira-Sheikh Accord a step forward or a step backward. Please Comment?*

RS: I don't understand what we gained from it. Militancy emerged only after that. When Plebiscite Front worker, who had been shouting, "Yeh Kashmir Mera Hai, Iska Faisla Hum Karengah" turned into National Conference worker, there was no change of heart and mind. He continued to believe in old politics. The only difference was that now he was part of the power structure.

Secondly, accord did not strengthen the democratic tradition. It would have been better had there been elections in which NC and Congress would have been the rival contenders. Alternately, Sheikh Abdullah could have joined the Congress and become the leader of Congress Legislature Party. We did not play our cards positively.

*KS: What do you think contributed to militancy? How far is NC responsible?*



RS: At the local level there are three factors responsible. Patronage to fundamentalist politics by Qasim regime helped Jamaat Islami to spread its political network and make strong inroads into the administration. Secondly, bad governance with corruption, nepotism and favouritism as its main principles, led to widespread resentment among the people. Merit was totally ignored.

Thirdly, National Conference ignored the ongoing subversion. Sheikh Abdullah was a towering personality. As long as he was alive, everything remained hidden. After his death, pro-Pak elements defied the state authorities openly. It is unfair to put the blame on NC for involvement in militancy. Other parties are not saints. All parties are guilty on this score.

*KS: Do you have a road map for normalcy in Kashmir? What has been the Centre's role?*

RS: I do not see any ray of hope, because the whole political system has collapsed. Corruption has taken deep roots at all levels--administratively, politically and socially. Nobody is interested in serious positive work. There has also been a collapse of ideology. Every government wants to pass time and push the buck to its predecessors. There are quarrels over the berths and portfolios. Politics, which implies service of the people, does not exist anymore. Forums and NGOs have become part of big business and political corruption.

The Centre is equally guilty for the drift in J&K. Whenever we tried to bring home to Central leaders, the dangerous situation that was developing they would ask us to 'give in writing'. Who would like to endanger his personal security? Immediately after 1986 and formation of Muslim United Front, a delegation of State Congress leaders met the Union Home Minister and apprised him about the situation. The Centre had no will to act nor any understanding of the problem. Mr Narsimha Rao, after the expiry of his term as Prime Minister told me, "I was mislead". He did not visit Kashmir valley even once. Central government's interaction remains restricted to state government and few high officials. They have no ears to the ground to know how the common Kashmiri feels about everything.

*KS: What are your views on greater autonomy to J&K?*

RS: National Conference has been never serious about the autonomy demand. It has no politics and hence relies on these slogans. It has not been able to convince the NDA government of which it is a partner, as to how this demand helps the people of the state. If at all NC is seriously worried about the welfare of Kashmiris, let it come forward and play the role of responsible opposition by articulating the day to day problems of the people. It is simply not bothered.

*KS: Who is responsible for Kashmiri Pandits' exodus? How can they be restored back to their homeland? Is the new government really serious about their return?*

RS: In the wake of militancy the whole system, which could protect Kashmiri Pandits, broke down. How could they have continued to stay on? On one side they faced threats of militants, while on the other the government was incapable of protecting them. The second factor is that the fundamentalist political indoctrination over the years has created a communal divide, which facilitated the exodus. There were pro-Jamaat elements in political parties and administration. How could this system provide protection to Kashmiri Pandits?

Lastly, I must confess that we did not play our role as individuals or as political activists. In 1947 at the time of tribal raid we mobilised people with slogans of '*Hamlavar Khabardar, Hum Kashmiri Hai Tayar*'. This created confidence among Kashmiri Pandits and made the majority community conscious about its responsibility towards the minority. What has been our contribution this time? We said 'Pandits have left, OK'. Later on some Muslims also had to flee due to the militant threats. No political leader cared about Pandits or the consequences of exodus. Every party abandoned Pandits to their fate.

Kashmiri Pandits cannot return till there is complete restoration of normalcy. Every other day people in the Valley are being singled out and butchered. The yardstick for return of normalcy is when the Chief Minister can visit downtown Srinagar without his commandos and other security.

Return of Kashmiri Pandits at this juncture is not practicable. If at all people have to visit Khir Bhawani and Mattan, you can expand the infrastructure for extended stay during festivals. This return plan lacks sincerity.

Lastly, Pandits' return is not possible unless there is a social rapprochement. Fundamentalist politics has created a social divide. You have also to create stakes for Pandits' return i.e. jobs, restoration of property and business, etc. If you are serious about Kashmiri Pandits' return, then these issues have to be seriously addressed. I can assure you that at the level of common man there is yearning for return of Pandits. Their exodus has created a vacuum. The migration of teachers has caused a tremendous setback to the education system in the Valley. No Kashmiri can forget the contribution of Pt. Sat Pal Razdan in this field. But political activists are not interested. They confine themselves to issuing statements on Pandits' return. I again reiterate what are we contributing in facilitating return of Pandits? There is total collapse of politics, no inner party discussions. You visit the offices of different political parties. Except for the paid staff, you will find no political worker there. At the level of Centre, there is total lack of appreciation about exodus and the return issue.

*KS: What is your message to Kashmiris?*

RS: The difficult period we are passing through demands that all political activists, students, social activists should come forward to see that J&K comes out of this mess. Persons with clean image have to shoulder the responsibility of leading them.

### **3 Pakistan: How Historiography leads to hypocrisy**

**By P.K. Kothari**

History-writing in Pakistan has remained problematic for obvious reasons. Compulsions to undertake the task of historiography under the framework of 'Pakistan ideology' has led to large-scale distortion of facts, non-inclusion of events of historical importance, promotion of hate against India and stereotyping. 'Pakistan ideology' is based on the idea of a separate Muslim nationhood and justifies the partition of India. To master the present, the control of the past is desired. Whenever history is written under the influence of an ideology, its objectivity is sacrificed. Facts are to be manipulated to justify the acts of the political leadership.

As Pakistani society has started reaping the bitter harvest of distorted historiography, an articulate opposition has emerged. It is openly questioning the Pakistan state on its role in disseminating history that is injurious to the society. 'The Murder of history' by Professor KK Aziz is a telling indictment of the establishment, involved in writing text-books for Pakistan students. According to Professor KK Aziz What is being taught as history in Pakistani schools and colleges is really national mythology and the subjects of social studies and Pakistan studies are nothing but vehicles of political indoctrination. He adds, "Our children don't learnt history. They are ordered to read a carefully selected collections of falsehoods, fairy tales and plain lies.

Mubarak Ali, a noted scholar and author of "History on Trial" pronounces similar views. He has shown how even reputed Pakistani historians are part of this grand industry involved in distortion of history. He warns, "The disjointed and selected version of history fails to create any historical consciousness among students and the general public. When full facts of historical processes are not recorded, it reduces the power of analysis and society is condemned to repeat the history again and again".

#### **Disowning and Distortions:**

Distortion of history needs to be studied at two levels—elite and through text-books. In dealing with the ancient past the Pakistani historian on the basis of two nation theory disowns the pre-Islamic past. Asadullah Bhutto, a Jamaat Islami ideologue once gave a press statement that Mohenja Daro and other archeological remains should be bulldozed.

Pakistani historians seek an Islamic link with the Arab conquest of Sindh. As per them, the conquest of Sindh made Indian Muslims, a part of the Arab empire. This makes them more enchanted with the glories of Damascus, Baghdad, Cairo and Cordoba than with the Indian counterparts of Delhi, Agra or Fatehpur Sikri. They also try to craft Central Asian links. Imagine even a reputed Pakistani archeologist and historian AH Dani says that Pakistan has closer and stronger cultural links with Central Asia than with India.

As the Centre of power of Muslim dynasties was situated in India, the medieval history is reconstructed under the title of history Pak-Hind. Pakistani historians criticise the rule of Muslim dynasties as being un-Islamic. They pronounce that these kings inducted Hindus in their administration and weakened the Islamic character of the state. IH Qureishi, a leading historian and author of, 'The Muslim Community of the Indian sub-continent', criticises Akbar for including Hindus as partners and treating them as equals. He argues, "And in the final analysis, if the Muslim were to forget their uniqueness and come to absorb as Akbar did, contradictory tendencies and beliefs from other religions, could the Muslim nation continue to exist as a separate nation? Akbar's policies created danger not only for the Muslim empire but also for the continued existence of the Muslim nation in the subcontinent". Akbar is much maligned in the Pakistani historiography and is completely omitted from the school text-books.

The Jamaat Islami critique of Muslim conquerors is equally harsh. It says they did not do enough for propagation of Islam and plundered wealth of non-Muslims for their personal pleasure. It these kings for lacking passion for Jihad. Zahid Ali Wasti, a Jamaat intellectual remarks that policy Akbar and others followed of marrying Hindu women polluted Muslim culture. He says, "when the Mughal rulers married

Hindu women and allowed them to keep their religion, it was disaster. As a result of these marriages, Mughal rulers were born from Hindu mothers". To this is attributed the disintegration of Muslim empire.

Medieval Indian history is not regarded as a part of the Pakistani historiography because the Hindus and the Muslims both shared it. The culture that was produced by both is looked upon as a denial of Muslim separatism.

The treatment of freedom struggle is resolved by shifting the emphasis from "freedom struggle" to "struggle for Pakistan". The creation of Pakistan is regarded as a victory against the Hindus and not against the British.

### **Regional Histories:**

In the case of Punjab, its Sikh period is rejected and downgraded as "Sikha Shahi", which is synonymous with anarchy and disorder. The wars of the Sikhs, which were fought against the British, have no mention in the history books. On the other hand, British conquest of Punjab is hailed as a blessing for the people of Punjab because it delivered them from Sikh rule.

The British gave crushing defeat to Talpur Mirs, the rulers of Sindh in 1843. To minimise the humiliation of the defeat, historians seek to glorify some individuals who fought bravely against the British. Sindh is given credit because its legislative assembly was the first to vote for joining Pakistan. The NWFP is remembered for its resistance to colonial rule but the allegiance of its political leadership to the Congress is condemned. The political leadership and not the people are blamed. On Baluchistan, the resistance of the Kalat state not to accede to Pakistan is not mentioned in the text-books.

Pakistani historiography tries to homogenise the culture, traditions, and social and religious life of the people. Mubarak Ali in his well-researched study "History, Ideology and curriculum", notes, "Any attempt to assert the historical identity of a region is discouraged and condemned. This also affects the non-Muslim religious minorities, who are also excluded from the mainstream of history". This suits the political attempts towards centralisation.

Historiography has also to deal with crisis of legitimacy that confronts Pakistan as a nation and a democracy in the face of unending cycles of military dictatorship, the separation of Bangladeshi, Talibanisation of Pakistan state and society. History text-books became the victims. History as a subject was discontinued in 1961 and was incorporated in the text-books on social sciences.

### **The Text-Books:**

The text-books carry prescribed myths, which suit the proponents of 'Pakistan ideology'. Prof. K.K. Aziz in 'The murder of history', has put enough of hardwork to catalogue the errors. In this study, Prof. Aziz delineates the positive contribution from the negative contribution. What these text-books say is their positive contribution to the sociology of ignorance: the kind of knowledge they are imparting. The negative contribution is what they add to the unlightenment by withholding what should be told to the students. There are several matters of grave import pertaining both to the past and to contemporary times which fail to find mention in the books.

What purpose does such text-book writing serves? Prof Aziz himself explains. "The goal, it seems is to produce a generation with the following traits: docility, inability to ask questions, capacity to indulge in pleasurable illusions, pride in wearing blinkers, willingness to accept guidance from above, alacrity to like and dislike things by order, tendency to ignore gaps in one's knowledge, enjoyment of make-believe, faith in the high value of pretences".

The text-books send the following messages to the students.

1. Follow the government in office: This official attitude produces such amusing oddities as the omission of the name of ZA Bhutto from all books published during General Zia-ul-Haque's rule. Millions of students who went to school during eleven years of Zia's dictatorship did not know what happened in the country between liberation of Bangladesh in 1971 and Zia's coup in 1977. The students are thus brainwashed to accept one particular ruler, whom the book extols, as a hero.

2. Support Military Rule:



Both under Ayub Khan's reign and Zia's rule, the two dictators were described to the students as pious and full of piety. Zia was further shown as God-fearing, kindly man, who brought Islam to the country for the first time, thus fulfilling the promise made by Jinnah during the Pakistan Movement years. While extolling Zia, even certain encomiums showered on him may sound blasphemous.

Several lessons for the students are implicit in this approach of text-books:

National leadership is incompetent, maladroit, inept, undependable and unqualified to rule the country. People who elected or supported the failed politicians are unfit for democracy. The modern democratic system itself is a western importation which finds no sanction in Islam. The armed forces have a supra-constitutional right to overthrow a civilian government whenever they think it is not "performing" its task "satisfact orally", i.e. to the satisfaction of the armed forces.

### 3. Glorify Wars:

The praetorian state cannot be by its nature an advocate of international peace. The authors of the book glorify wars, particularly the ones waged under military dictators. Implications of this marked emphasis on and special attention to the topic of war are: A tribute is paid to the armed forces, thus reinforcing the message-applaud military rule. Civilian form of government is played down. The emphasis on wars diverts the interest of the students from political problems and prospects to international security. The underlying point in all this is that in moments of national danger the armed forces are the only saviours of the people and the civilian governments and politicians are useless. Also, the 1965 and 1971 wars are presented as victories for Pakistan, which they were not. Prof. Aziz comments, "This creates self-complacency and false self-confidence, which can be dangerous in minds which are still growing".

### 4. Hate India:

Either to rationalise the glorification of wars or for some other reasons the text-books set out to create among the students a hatred for India and the Hindus, both in the historical context and as a part of current politics. The most common method in which this is done is to offer slanted descriptions of Hindu religion and culture, calling them "unclean" and "inferior". Muslim rule over the Hindus is praised for having put an end to all "bad" Hindu religious beliefs and practices and thus "eliminated" classical Hinduism from India. It is asserted that the communal riots accompanying and following the partition of 1947 were initiated exclusively by the Hindus and the Sikhs and that the Muslims were at no place and time aggressors but merely helpless victims. Generous and undue space is given to study of wars with India. Ground realities are, however, different. The students thus are flabbergasted when they read one thing in the books and see and experience another in life. What impact will this have on students, Prof Aziz answers, "the students are bound to grow up with a love-hate sentiment for India, with a contempt for their elders who claim one thing and do another and with the seeds of hypocrisy sown deep in their character?"

### 5. Fabricate an Anti-Colonial Past?:

The text-books give to Indian history and the Muslim nationalist struggle a complexion whom even the most cunning make-up will not enable to stand a whiff of historical reality. This fantasy is created through several measures of commission and omission. The revolt of 1857 is described as Jihad undertaken by the Muslims alone and later some non-Muslims joined in. The information is withheld that from the time of Shah Abdul Aziz onwards the great majority of the ulema did not issue a fatwa against British rule, and most of the poets and intellectuals from the middle of the eighteenth century till independence supported and admired British authority and culture. No mention is made of British help to various Muslim societies. The long history of Muslim loyalty to British public life is omitted from all text-books. It is concealed from the students that a large number of eminent Muslims were not in the Muslim League or in the Pakistan movement. As the Congress is usually accepted as an anti-British fiercely nationalistic, self-sacrificing movement, the Muslim League too ought to be shown in a similar garb, hence the urgency to fabricate anti-colonial past.

### 6. Give the entire credit to Aligarh and the UP and impose a new culture on Pakistan:

Text books trace back to the Aligarh movement every political, social, intellectual, religious and educational development that took place in Muslim India. Textbooks also persist in preaching that UP was the home of Pakistani culture. Excellent critique of text-books on the contribution of Aligarh/UP and UP culture, by Prof Aziz has totally gone unnoticed in India. He says the double claim that the people of the UP were in the forefront of the struggle for the creation of Pakistan and that their culture is the source or foster-mother of Pakistani culture has produced problems of identity for the indigenous population of Pakistan. This has led to the inferiority complex among people of Punjab and other provinces, throttled their culture, languages and literature.

**Negative Contribution:**

In text-books there is exclusion of Bengal from national consciousness. The other major topics not covered in the text-books include the role of Indian National Congress, the Khudai Khidmatgars, The Punjab Union Party, The Khaksar Movement, The Ahrar Party, The Nationalist or Pro-Congress Muslims, Historiography of India, Theory and Philosophy of History, Economic, Social, Intellectual and Literary History and Modern Islamic Thought.

**Hypocrisy:**

In 1984, Faiz Ahmed Faiz, the great Urdu poet, used to teach his grandson, reading then in 10th class. After going through the text-books, Faiz asked his grandson to learn the text-book for examination and something different as truth. The grandson turned to Faiz's wife and said, "Mama, I shall have to become a hypocrite. Well Nana says if you want to pass your examination reproduce this book. You have no choice. But I have given you an alternative-the truth, keep that in mind". Then heaving a sigh asked grandmom again, "But what of those who will never have a choice."

## **4 Kashmir's Temple of Higher Education**

### *Sri Pratap College*

**By Dr B.N. Sharga**

THE British Parliament through a proclamation signed by Queen Victoria took over the administration of India in 1858 from the East India Company. After that to introduce the pattern of English education in this country, the British then established three universities in India at Calcutta, Bombay and Madras which were the three important port cities at that time. The British then placed the whole of north India from Peshawar to Calcutta (Kolkata) under the jurisdiction of the Calcutta University for conducting the examinations and for awarding the degrees.

Prior to this Lamartenier College was established in Lucknow in 1845 as per Will made by Maj. Gen. Clude Martin, a French national for imparting English education. It was affiliated with the Cambridge University, London. The Kashmiri Pandit boys residing in Kashmiri Mohalla at that time generally used to read Urdu and Persian in Makhtabs which was the court language then, to get good jobs. The progressive minded Kashmiri Pandit boys like Sheo Narain Bahar and Pran Nath Bazaz then took the lead and joined the Lamartinier College for English education, much against the wishes of the community members. Their craze for the English education can be judged by the fact that they used to go to their college on foot which was at a distance of about 12 kms. from Kashmiri Mohalla. Sheo Narain Bahar also encouraged the other community members towards the English education for better future prospects.

In 1864 Canning College was established in Lucknow which was then affiliated with the Calcutta University. Some Kashmiri Pandit boys with progressive ideas under the guidance and leadership of Pandit Sheo Narain Bahar then joined the Canning College to have European education for better future prospects than having a traditional education in Urdu and Persian language in Makhtabs. Pandit Sheo Narain Bahar just to propagate his progressive ideas and thoughts in the field of education and to bring about social reforms in the community started a caste journal in 1872 known as Mursala-e-Kashmir. Through this journal he tried his best to galvanize the community towards English education, especially the young boys of the community, so much so that in 1884 Pt. Bishan Narain Dar left for England to study law with his British Professor of the Canning College Professor Gaul, when sea voyage was considered to be an unpardonable sin by the community members. He came back to India as a barrister in 1887. Such enlightened and educated Kashmiri Pandits then formed a club in Kashmir Mohalla to carry out their ideology effectively especially in the field of education and for bringing certain reforms in the community.

Dr. Annie Besant, an Irish lady came to India in 1893 to study Vedas thoroughly. She became so much fascinated with the Hindu Philosophy and way of life that she formed the Theosophical Society of India in the country for the revival of Hindu nationalism and decided to establish a University in the country for teaching Vedantic philosophy. Her desire fructified in the shape of Central Hindu College which she started in a rented building in Karna Ghanta in Benaras (Varanasi) on 7th July 1898. A managing committee was then formed under Babu Govind Das as its Chairman to run this institution. Dr. Arthur Richardson, a Cambridge University graduate, was then appointed as the first Principal of this college. Babu Upendra Nath Basu who was a member of Syndicate of the Allahabad University, was given the task for the recognition of this college from the Allahabad University, which was done on August 6, 1898.

Dr. Annie Besant approached the then Kashi Naresh, Raja Prabhu Narain Singh and requested him to donate a big piece of land for the expansion of this college. Raja Prabhu Narain Singh very graciously donated a big building and a piece of land in Kamchha for this college to her, where this college was shifted in March 1899.

Dr. Annie Besant made Pt. Suraj Narain Bahadur who was a sub judge and a great educationist as the secretary of her Theosophical Society of India. She used to organise regular meetings of this society at the residence of Pt. Suraj Narain Bahadur in Kashmiri Mohalla, where the other progressive minded Kashmiri

Pandits of the locality like Prof. Iqbal Krishna Sharga, Prof. Chand Narain Bahadur, Pt. Iqbal Narain Gurtu, Pt. Bishan Narain Dar, Pt. Sangam Lal Chak, Pt. Hari Krishna Kaul, Pt. Sri Krishna Tikku etc. who were the products of Canning College, generally used to assemble. The main thrust in such meetings used to be the education of Kashmiri Pandit boys and social reforms in the community.

There was no provision for the higher education in the Kashmir Valley at that time. The Kashmiri Pandit boys used to go either to Lucknow or to Allahabad for higher studies where the University of Allahabad was established in 1887. This was both expensive and cumbersome. So in one of the meetings of the Theosophical Society it was proposed to open a college at Srinagar for the benefit of those Kashmiri Pandit boys who were keen for higher studies.

Consequently Dr Annie Besant herself with some of her trusted members went to Srinagar to explore the possibilities for establishing a college there. She took a house in Mohalla Bar Bar Shah on rent and started a school in it, duly named as Sir Pratap Singh Hindu School after the ruler of Jammu and Kashmir Riyasat, Maharaja Pratap Singh (1885-1925). Exactly in which year this school was started in Sathu Bar Bar Shah locality is not known.

In 1902 Pt. Brijendra Nath Sharga went to England from Kashmiri Mohalla Lucknow to study law at Lincon's Inn. He met with a tragic road accident in London in 1904. From his death bed he donated Rs 10,000 to Dr Annie Besant for development of the structural facilities for the education of Hindu students in Central Hindu College, Benaras. Consequently Dr Annie Besant built a multipurpose magnificent "Sharga Hall" in the college from that money, so that way the Sharga family came into close contact with Dr Annie Besant. The other products of the Canning College, Lucknow like Pt. Suraj Narain Bahadur a subjudge, barrister Bishan Narain Dar who became a member of the Viceroy's Imperial Legislative Council, Pt. Iqbal Narain Gurtu who became the Vice-Chancellor of the Benaras Hindu University, Pt. Hari Krishan Kaul who became a district and sessions Judge, Pt. Sri Krishna Tikku who became a government pleader and Pt. Sangam Lal Chak etc. also actively helped Dr Annie Besant in her mission and donated money most liberally for this great cause.

Dr. Annie Besant then approached Maharaja Pratap Singh the then ruler of Jammu and Kashmir Riyasat around 1903 and requested him to donate a big piece of land so that a new building could be constructed for Sri Pratap Singh Hindu School for its future growth and development, which was functioning more or less as a branch of the Central Hindu College Benaras then. On her request Maharaja Pratap Singh very graciously donated a big chunk of land in Kothi Bagh area near Amira Kadal for this institution and a new building of the college was built there from the liberal donations of the Kashmiri Pandits who were very close to Dr Annie Besant at that time.

This institution from its new premises near Amira Kadal on Maulana Azad Road was formally started functioning as an intermediate college in 1905 and Prof. M.C. Moore an Irish scholar and a graduate of the Cambridge University, London, was appointed by Dr. Annie Besant as its first Principal. The management of this college was then placed under the control of Central Hindu College Trust Benaras, which was affiliated with the Allahabad University at that time. Maharaja Pratap Singh laid the foundation of this college on his birthday. Dr Annie Besant in her thanks giving speech said that "Maharaja had given a long awaited boon to Kashmir and Kashmir would be future Kashi of North Western India."

This college under the dynamic administrative control of Prof. Moore registered a marked development in all the directions, starting with a modest roll of eight students and only six teachers on its staff. Prof. Moore left this institution in 1908.

Dr. Annie Besant then appointed another British Prof. E. William Collie as the Principal of this college, but unfortunately he died a tragic death in a fire accident while staying in a house boat in Dal Lake. Prof. Vanmali Chakarborty a Bengali fellow was then asked by Dr. Annie Besant to take charge of this institution who functioned as Principal upto 1909.

Dr. Annie Besant later Prof. Iqbal Krishna Sharga who was an established authority on Hindu Philosophy with a vast teaching experience at the Bareilly College and Pt. Chand Narain Bahadur another product of

Canning College, Lucknow to shoulder her responsibilities in a missionary spirit in the interest of the community to give a new direction to her work in the field of higher education in the Valley. Consequently Prof. Iqbal Krishna Sharga became the Principal of Sri Pratap Singh Hindu College in 1909 and Pt. Chand Narain Bahadur was made the Professor of English in the same institution by Dr Annie Besant.

The society in Kashmir in general at that time used to be highly orthodox and superstitious. To remove the segregation between the Pandit and Muslim boys Prof. I.K. Sharga introduced the common tea club system in the college premises for their free mixing with each other without any inhibitions and preconceived notions. He used to subsidise this tea club from his own income. To tone up the over all academic excellence of the college he introduced the monthly examination system. Due to Prof. Sharga's untiring efforts this institution saw a rapid growth in every field and became a degree college in 1911. Right from its inception in 1905 it was affiliated with the Allahabad University. Even the intermediate examination at that time known as F.A. was being conducted by the University. The Benaras Hindu University was established by Pt. Madan Mohan Malviya much later in 1916. Prof. Iqbal Krishna Sharga also started the new tradition of celebrating the spring festival (Navreh), the new year of Kashmiri Pandits on a grand scale in the college premises.

The British government then became alarmed with all these developments and the growing influence of Dr. Annie Besant in the Valley, who was a very strong votary for granting freedom to this country and was actively working for the revival of Hindu nationalism through Vedantic teachings. It was not to the liking of the British government.

The then secretary of States wrote a note on the file observing thus "Mrs. Besant's influence is bound to have political consequences and her religious teaching certainly tends and I believe is deliberately meant; to promote the idea of an Indian nation, which is spreading gradually and which in course of time many assume a form adverse to the British rule."

The then foreign secretary concurring with this view noted "that it was very desirable that the British Residence in Jammu and Kashmir through the Darbar should have a proper control over such teaching schools in the Valley for deciding their policies and programmes". Under this policy the British then shot a letter to Maharaja Pratap Singh to take over the management of this college.

As a result of all these behind the curtain activities of the British, the management of this college gradually passed into the hands of the Darbar leading ultimately to its complete takeover in July 1912 by the Jammu and Kashmir government. To give it a so-called "secular" look the word "Hindu" was dropped from its name and it was rechristened as "Sri Pratap College". It was then affiliated with the Punjab University of Lahore. There were in all 74 students at the time of its take over on the college rolls. Of these 15 were in the degree classes and 59 in FA classes.

The Board of Trustees of the Central Hindu College, Benaras authorised Dr. Annie Besant to handover the college premises to the government of Jammu and Kashmir on receipt of Rs 20,000 in consideration of the cost of the building and furniture etc. erected and supplied by them out of the donations raised by them. On the birth day of Maharaja Pratap Singh in July 1912 it was formally taken over by the state government.

For the further development of this only prestigious institution of higher education in the Valley at that time four new posts of Professors were created to appoint more qualified and efficient men. Upto 1913 it became a post graduate college with MA classes in Philosophy, English and Mathematics. Though Prof. Iqbal Krishna Sharga was simply a BA but he used to teach both Philosophy and English to MA students with great authority, ably assisted by another product of Canning College, Lucknow Prof. Chand Narain Bahadur.

In 1915 and in 1916 the regular MA classes in Sanskrit language and in history were started respectively. The teaching of the science subjects, upto the intermediate level also started almost simultaneously. The college started publishing its own literary magazine "Pratap" in 1916. A professor of the college was then



sent to Lahore to learn the work of library management under Mr. Dickinson, an American expert who was engaged by the Punjab University to train the people in the field of library science.

In 1918 the then Viceroy and Governor General of India Lord Chelmsford paid a visit to this college to inaugurate its newly constructed science block. Prof. Iqbal Krishna Sharga who was appointed by Dr Annie Besant as the Principal of this college retired in 1921 after attaining the age of superannuation. After that the state government of Jammu and Kashmir Riyasat appointed Prof. Lawrence Marcdermat, a British scholar as the Principal of this college. He continued on this post upto 1931. During his tenure additional blocks were added to provide proper teaching facilities to more number of students as their strength was increasing every year. For this purpose Rs 22,759 were sanctioned by the state council for higher education on August 25, 1924. For further expansion of the college to meet the growing needs of the students Wazir Buildings adjacent to the college were taken on rent on Rs 100 per month to provide hostel accommodation for the outstation students. To properly maintain the accounts of the college the post of an Accountant and Cashier were added in the college office.

The college then made a rapid progress during the tenure of Maulvi Ibrahim, who took over the charge of Principal of this institution from Prof. Kanji Lal in 1931. During his tenure the science classes at the degree level were started.

In order to cope with the unprecedented increase in the number of students and to maintain high academic standards the Darbar then appointed a committee under the Chairman of Director of Education to thoroughly study the working of the college and to suggest necessary steps which should be taken to tone up the efficiency of the college and to divert the students to other suitable channels. This committee had the privilege to have members like Dr. Zakir Hussain, who was the Principal of Jamia Millia Islamic, Delhi at that time and Prof. G.D. Sondhi, who was the Principal of Government College Lahore. On their recommendations the bifurcation of the college into Sri Pratap Intermediate College and Amar Singh Degree College was carried out on September 1, 1942.

When the country was partitioned in 1947 Prof. R.C. Pandita was the Principal of this college. Since then Sri Pratap College has gone through a revolutionary change. Now it is purely a science college affiliated with the Kashmiri University spread in an area of 6,42,000 sq. feet i.e. roughly 116 kanals. The college has 11 teaching departments with a strength of 75 faculty members and 87 members of the non teaching staff. The college has well equipped science laboratories and a library with about 65,000 books on its shelves. There are 12 buildings in its campus, housing various departments and offices. Dr S.G. Sarwar is the present Principal of this college who is taking great pains in maintaining the academic excellence of this institution for which it was famous once all over the Valley.

The Kashmiri Pandits under the patronage of Dr. Annie Besant nurtured this magnificent edifice with their sweat and blood in its formative years with a missionary zeal to spread the message of light and learning in the entire Valley. It symbolises their proud cultural heritage and represents not only their farsighted vision but also their valuable contribution for improving the prospects of the future generations by guiding their destiny for all times to come.

*"Sachchai chhup nahi sakti*

*Kabhi jhote usoolon se,*

*Ki khushboo aa nahin sakti*

*Kabhi kagaz ke phoolon se".*

## 5 *Encroachment of Pandit Land—Will Mufti Govt: Act?*

### **By Special Correspondent**

Kashmiri Pandits were not only physically forced out of their homeland but their immovable and movable properties were not even spared. The left out movable property was looted, houses burnt, destroyed or occupied and land and orchards encroached. What is more intriguing is the fact that inspite of enacting a law "*The Jammu and Kashmir Migrant Immovable Property (Preservation, Protection and Restraint on Distress Sale) Act, 1997*". to stop distress sale and appoint Deputy Commissioners as custodians of migrant property, no action was initiated by the administration in this regard. There are enough evidences where Kashmiri Pandits complained about illegal occupations or encroachments but the administration did not take any action to undo these illegal occupations and encroachments not to speak of initiating any action against the encroachers.

As government did not take any action, more and more unscrupulous elements were encouraged to lay their hand on Pandits' properties and the trend continued even after enacting the law in 1997.

In this particular case, the land was encroached after enacting the law and no action has been taken by the administration till date. Shankarpora village in Chadura tehsil of Budgam district is in close vicinity of Srinagar city. Due to expansion of Srinagar city, the market value of land property has increased manifold and Pandits' land has become target of land grabbers and miscreants. Kundan Lal Koul, Kashi Nath Koul, Makhan Lal Koul, Bansi Lal Koul and Jawahar Lal Koul sons of late Gopinath Koul of Shankarpora are exclusive owners of an Orchard measuring more than 30 kanals under the Survey No: 43 min in the village. One, Ghulam Hassan Aram, alias Waza purchased some land from Mohd. Maqbool Magray adjacent to the Kouls' orchard. In the garb of same purchase, Mr. Waza has encroached upon the Orchard and has even blocked the entrance to the Orchard.

The Kouls approached chief secretary J&K Government through a legal notice on 13/10/2002 requesting to take legal action and Undo the encroachment. Copies of the notice were sent to Divisional Commissioner Srinagar, DC Budgam, SSP Budgam for action and even a copy was sent to the illegal occupant.

The aggrieved party again reminded the said officials on 20/11/2000. Surprisingly no action has been initiated till date though the Pandits continued to knock the doors of the administration. Mr Waza is proprietor of Oriental Hotel, Srinagar and as such enjoys clout in the administration. "Mr Waza is even threatening those Muslim villagers who are opposed to this encroachment by implicating them in false cases", says Kundan Lal Koul, one of the share holders of the Orchard.

Encroachment has been employed as a modus operandi by the miscreants to force distress sale of Pandits property. Once the land is encroached and no hope of any action by biased administration, Pandits are forced to sell the property at throw away prices. In this case also, the motive may be same as Mr. Waza is reportedly interested in developing land into a residential colony.

Kouls who could not get any relief from previous government, approached Revenue Minister (now portfolios changed) Mr Ghulam Hassan Mir of new coalition government. Mr Mir marked the case for DC Budgam to treat the matter urgent and solve the problem and assured Pandits of Justice. It is now to be seen whether the new government takes any action in this particular case and many more such cases or keeps crying like predecessors without giving any relief to Pandits in case of illegal occupations and encroachments.

## **6 *Aftermath of Kashmiri Pandit's Exodus***

**By Prof. Omkar Nath Raina**

The Valley of Kashmir that is well known for its beauty and splendour has attracted thousands of pilgrims since times immovable. This enchanting place is said to be the land of Gods. People belonging to different religious came here and carried with them the immense wealth of spiritual knowledge. Religion has never been a barrier between the people of Kashmir, because wise men of Kashmir propagated universal brotherhood, mutual love and equality between men and man, regardless of caste, creed and nationality.

It is unfortunately eventuality that Hindus and Muslims living in perfect harmony and emity in a land which was known as paradise on earth and paradoxically choose to confront one another on the basis of communal angle. The reasons are not far to seek. There have been certain fauxpas which have led to misplaced animosity for the Govt. of India and this was coloured as animity on the communal lives. Even though Muslims out-numbered Hindus in Kmr. yet surprisingly unlike the situation in other parts of India we lived in a spirit of comadarie all along. The turns and twists came in the post. Independence period. If we have a dig to the past we may be able to bring to the surface certain mistakes committed both in the area of politics and certain socio-economic reasons and in these we need no go at length. The dye is cast. The present unfortunate happening has taken a very ugly turn which could largely be attributed to the two nation theory of Pakistan. The Provocation as given by the Pakistan to India solely on the basis of communal lives is the greatest factor which has swayed the Kashmiri Muslim youth to take up arms and get training across the border. The whole matter as it has boiled down to stands that the recalcitrant Muslim youth of Kmr. are hell bent upon to create trouble both for India as well as Kashmiri Hindus, resulting in the exodus of the Hindus from that place; together with those of the Muslims but mostly business people to small number who choose to remain away from Kashmir and settle mostly at Jammu and Delhi.

The Kashmir who ran for their security and life away from Kashmir have mostly rural background. These people have their own sub cultures which initially made them very difficult to adjust in urban areas outside Kmr. Now that they are away from their homes for almost twelve years. The exodus of these rural people have created problems for the urban people and it is becoming increasingly difficult for these rural people to get fully submerged economically, socially and culturally with the people of the urban area particularly Jammu per force these rural people could not stick at one place had to move out from Jammu to places like Delhi and other metropolitan cities, when it become all the more difficult from them to coup up with the rush and race of such bigger cities. Thus they are at a loss to accommodate themselves to find a way out. Thee is one more factor which has aggravated their uneasiness because they happen to be lesser qualified as compared to those Kashmiri Hindus who have moved out from towns and cities in Kashmir like Srinagar, Anantnag, Baramulla.

In Jammu new problems have surfaced as a result of this exodus to Jammu. Certain problems cropped up, for instance house accommodation, the problem of earning a livelihood, social problems--finding a suitable match for their daughters and very important one being changing of food habits and climatic conditions. All these pressed them down and they began to feel uneasy. Jammu being holter as compared to Kmr. they had to face the sweltering heat of Jammu in Summer season which they could not with stand and had to face the ailment like stoke, malaria and allied problems of health. In this way they have become unadjustable and now-a-days are in deep sea level. The other side of this picture is people of Jammu have been strained to the utmost. The rental value of the houses have considerably increased.

Vegetables have become dearer. Mutual adjustibility of Kashmiri and Dogras have started to come out from the seams which has taken shape of bekrings and sometimes it takes the shape of squabbles. This has become isole for the administration in Jammu.

Now the Dogras of the Jammu have started feeling uneasy because of the rising price of daily consumptional commodities Kashmiri are also becoming uneasy and wish to return back to their homes and hearths. It is not that some crumps have been thrown by the government in the form of financial relief



which is grossly inadequate. Living in the camps as against in their own decent homes have aggravated the problem. Anxiety is but large on their faces. They are never happy and could not adjust to the changing scenario, but the gun-toting militants of Kmr. keeps them away from returning to homes.

These migrants though they are not happy where they have migrated yet they have started to take up alternate jobs in Jammu and elsewhere. They are now thinking in terms of constructing their own houses largely in Jammu and getting absorbed culturally, economically and socially with the people in Jammu willy-nilly.

The future of these Kashmiri Pandits appears to be bleak. They have lost their identity in the mading Crowd outside Kashmir but what mostly aches them is the future of their children who are in a very bad shape. These Kashmir do not have very good purse to set their wards on the right track. Because normally all Kashmiri Pandits believe largely in good education of their children for which money is wanting and this pains them. Kashmiri Pandits have to have lesser degree engaged themselves in business. They have always believed in good education whether academic or technical and drained out their every source of income in this cause. This is a position which they have not been able to reconcile with. Thus they are psychologically depressed, economically in a bad shape and culturally not being able to accommodate themselves.

In Jammu itself this migration has brought a train of difficulties for themselves as well as their hoasts. It has been observed that their coming to Jammu has created problems like pollution, unhygienic living, a non-availability of jobs and no supportive finance to give a new lease of life to their business. Among themselves the Kashmiri as migrants having become irritative have landed themselves into a blind alley. They cannot themselves determine their own course. They are in two minds—first they would like to return to their homes of their birth and second not to go there as they are conscious of the fact that the days of amity and friendliness in Kashmir Hindus vis-a-vis Kashmiri Pandits could never be retrieved as the condition stand today, only a miracle could save them.

There is a brighter side of this picture. Mostly Jammu was semi-urban area. With the incoming of these migrants Jammu people have earned a good future for themselves. If the monthly rental value of a room was previously Rs 500 a month, new this has catapulated to 1000-1500 or even more. To meet the needs of Kashmiri Pandits the economic activities of Jammuites have considerably increased. New building have come up, new establishments like shops, schools, transport activities and earning from these have increased the fortune of Jammu people. The value of real estate has short up manifold, adding the their income and enabling them to live better and learn considerably from the mutual contact with the Kashmiri. The whole of Jammu is bustling with people found on roads, in buses, in shopping places, at ration ships and daity need centres. All these things have enriched the life of Jammuites. Even though the prices of all the eating commodities have gone up both for the Kashmiri and Jammuites. This rising in the value of daily needs has lost its bite because the additional income they have accrued from their rising the price of rental value and transport and other things. Jammu has turned into a big city unlike it was in older days. Govt. is not able to control the uncontrolled expansion as it is happening in other cities of India.

## 7 Lolab Valley: Shrines and Legends

**By. Dr. Ramesh Kumar**

Lolab, one of the most beautiful valleys of Kashmir, is located to the north-east of Srinagar. This valley, 15 miles long and 3 miles wide, is traversed by stream *Lahwal*, which flows down from the surrounding hills. Lolab has many pasture lands and a rich forest cover. Presently, it forms a part of Kupwara district. Locals call it Lolab. In Lok Prakasha, it is mentioned as *Lulavaka*, Pandit Sahib Ram in his *Tirathasamgraha*, calls it Laulaha.

Lolab has three valleys: *Kalaroos* valley, *Potnai* valley and the *Brunai* valley. Enchanting Nagmarg meadows separate Lolab from Bandipore. Sogam is the headquarters of Lolab region. In ancient times Sogam was ruled by a Kotraja and had over hundred villages under its jurisdiction. As per a legend, popular in Lolab, Sogam was so densely populated that a sheep, which climbed the roof of one house, situated at one end of the village, could reach the other end (Zaipora) without having to come down in between. During the rule of chaks, Sogam extended from Kralmiyach to Wovura. The Chak king stayed at Tangchak, near Aramurang. Kalhana refers to a King, who founded town of Lolora (Lolav) and "constructed eighty four lakhs of stone-buildings". There are also references to Damaras of Kamraj, who dug up force in Lolav to avert certain defeat.

### **Lolab: A huge lake:**

At the time when Kashmir was Satisar, Lolab too formed a part of the huge lake. There are legends which link Lolab with Kashyap Rishi. In the Rangvor forest, one Km. from the village Lalpur, is located *samadhi* of the legendary Kashyap rishi. Presently it is indistinguishable. No one can visit this place after having taken meat. In 1967, a villager had slaughtered a bull. 2-3 days later there was a terrible hail storm, as never seen before. Hail was as big as a piece of stone and looked like glass. The standing maize crops were destroyed in the entire south Lolab region. To this day people remember this calamitous event. Villagers bring yellow rice (Tahar) to *samadhi* and pray for prosperity.

The legendary account credits mythical Raza Loh for draining the waters and inviting people to settle down. The water got drained through Goose side. King Loh is believed to be a Gujrati. To get rid of a curse, the king had been busy doing '*tapasya*' for twelve years in a meadow in Lolab. Razdans of Razdan Kocha, Banamohalla, Srinagar are believed to be the descendants of King Loh.

Every year the shepherds would bring their flocks of cattle to the meadows in Lolab. At the end of the season either a shepherd or a cattle would go missing. Many seasons later, one day the shepherds saw smoke rising from a place in the forest. A voice emanating from this place called them. Thinking that this could be the calling of some devil, the shepherds ignored the call. When the calls persisted, the shepherds went to the place from where the smoke was rising. They were face to face with Raja Loh. The shepherds narrated their tale of woe. Raja told them hence forth neither any of the shepherds nor their cattle would go missing. He also implored them to come to stay permanently in Lolab. He told them on the day of Shivratri they should reach Harvan Bal (Lord Shiva's hill) and look for the smoke near the Kutiya. In case smoke was present, they should presume the Raja was alive. Shepherds belonged to Sopore and Zainagar.

### **Lav Nag:**

Another legend refers to the discord between King Loh and Kashyap Rishi. Once Raja decided to perform a havan and called Kashyap Rishi as the brahmin. As Kashyap Rishi blew the conch-shell, Raja shouted '*aavhan*'. Kashyap Rishi shouted back '*Visarjan*'. Raja Loh protested strongly. The *rishi* told him, 'It is my right to perform *havan*. How dare you do it'. Havan remained inconclusive.

The place where *havan* was performed there is a spring, named *Lohnag* or *Lavnag*, one km from Kashyap Rishi's *samadhi*. This beautiful spring with crystal-clear water is shaped like a Pranali and is three-feet deep. Water comes out from the western end of the spring. The spring is 10 ft x 10ft in dimensions.

Lavnag has remained historically important, Gulab Singh soon after conquering Kashmir visited it. He sanctioned a land grant of 113 canals for the upkeep of spring. His pet *pujari*, Pt. Gash Bhat, grand father

of late Prasad Bhat was in his company when the Dogra King visited the place. Shav Ratangeer, an ascetic, who used to stay at Durganag temple, came to Lav Nag and stayed at this place for 18 long years.

There is no specific day for *puja* at this historic spring. On the western side of the spring is a Chinar with four branches, Chakrabooni. It is a very old Chinar. Recently the Chinar was burnt. The platform around the spring has been cemented and the spring connected to a water reservoir.

### Gauri Spring:

In the vicinity, is another spring called, Gauirshari Nag, dedicated to goddess Gauri. This spring is small, round in shape and believed to be the resting place of the goddess, who had come to attend the *havan* performed by Raja Loh.

A number of shrines in the form of springs dot the entire Lolab area. Famous among these are;

*Thanin*, a spring dedicated to *Vishnu* is located in the Kalaroos valley. It is 11x11ft and its depth is five feet. *Harinag* spring is found in Varnav, near Sewer.

There are two springs in Krusen, a place founded by Raja Karn. It is a place some distance from Maidanpora. The two springs are dedicated to Lord Shiva and goddess Parvati. There is a *shivling* in Siva's spring. The spring dedicated to goddess Parvati is bottomless. Ladies are forbidden to visit this spring. *Lavalnag* is another spring near Divar and is four miles from Lohnag spring (Lalpur).

In Chandigam, the village named after goddess Chandi, there are three holy springs. The original *Chandinag* spring is spread over an area of 1½ canals in the forest. It is filled up now and has turned into a swamp. Before 1947, when a little excavation was carried out here, earthen lamps, small items, pottery associated with rituals were found, confirming the antiquity of the place. Locals call this place as Kanzpov. Digging also confirmed that springs lie underneath. Presently little water comes from the sides of the swamp. Decades back Pt. Balbadar Bujoo was a tehsildar here. His wife had gone to fetch some water. Her arm got stuck up in the mud.

The other spring in Chandigam is *Kumarji's Nag*. It lies in Gujar basti, the people who originally hail from Abottabad. The spring is situated on an elevated area near Dak bungalow. This is under the control of PHE department. It is 7ft x7ft in dimensions. The water is clean and cold and five feet deep. Water remains full throughout the year. The stones forming the upper masonry are intact. The boundaries of the spring are fenced. Ladies are not allowed to visit the spring. A big stone lining the spring cracked soon after the visit of a lady. And the water rushed out. The old stones (sam) lining the spring are 2½ ft long and well-polished. There is no fish in the spring. Viceroy of India visited this spring when Pt. Bujoo was tehsildar. Swami Lalji, a famous *sadhu* from outside often visited this spring to conduct *puja*. His disciples included Pt. Arzan boya, Swami Nandlalji, Pt. Shivjee Bagati and Pt. Ramchand 'Goban'. Pandits of Lolab visited this historic spring on Amavasiya and Puranmashi days.

There are two more springs in Chandigam. One is called *Pir Nag* spring of Chandibaba. The spring derives its name from the locality of Pirs. Otherwise it is known as Niranjan Akhara. The spring is lined by big old stones (sam), four in number. Throughout the year, the spring remains full of water, which is crystal-clear. The spring is shaped like a Pranali. Chandi Baba came here in 1956 and changed its shape. The other spring is *Nahgee*, adjacent to Mirsar. It is a small spring. Before exodus Pandits used to offer Kheer here.

Half a km. to the east of Nahgee spring is *Bren Sahr*. There is a bren (alm) tree and little water near it. As per local belief, the place is full of snakes. Children would not play here, nor the villagers would venture out late at night. Evil spirits would haunt a person, who would commit desecration.

### Sogam Springs:

*Nilakanth Spring* is 15ftx15ft. Old stones line its walls. Water is crystal clear and spring is 4½ feet deep. There are no fish in the spring. It is known as Nagbal. As per local belief Lord Shiva used to sit here. The spring is guarded by a hooded snake, yellow in colour. Elderly villagers of Sogam claim to have seen the snake. If the snake is not disturbed, it does not cause any harm. Pandits of Sogam used to take yellow

rice, Tahar or Satyideev on every Purnmashi day. In case there were no rains, Pandits and Muslims of the village would offer *niyaz* together.

There are also a number of *kunds* named after Ram, Sita, Lakshman and Hanuman. Ram and Sita Kunds are linked together and the water collected serves as water supply to the village. A part of the area has been encroached upon.

*Gangabug Spring* is dedicated to goddess Ganga. In shape the spring resembles Omkar. The spring is believed to be the abode of mother Ganges. It is 5½ ft deep. Special occasion for Puja is Gangashtmi or Sardashtmi day. On this day Pandit Arzan Bayu would clean the spring. The cleaning process, as per convention, was to be carried out only by Pandits. After the spring was cleaned, Pandits of Sogam would bring Kheer and Satyideev and conduct *puja, Prehpiyun*. Gangabug spring is located in Peer mohalla.

*Dardnag (Durganag)* spring is 8ftx10ft and three feet deep. It has clear water. Pandits would take Kheer here on Durgashtmi and Jyethashtmi day.

*Ganesh Nag* springs are two in number. One of these is 10ftx10 ft and 4½ ft deep. The other one is 14ftx10ft and 5ft deep. Both the springs are lined by polished old stones. The branch of a big bren (alm) tree, hangs down to cover the spring like the trunk of an elephant. (hsihkara). The branch is 10-15 ft long and has a Ganesh idol in it. There is another spring outside, the water of which is used for washing purposes. Around the spring is a Ganesh temple, the roof of which was damaged in 1947. Pandits used to perform *havan* on *Ganachodah* day and offer 'Bread' (Choht). It has been reported that of late during the evenings a lamp, chong is seen burning here.

#### **Other Shrines:**

In Sogam there is a place called *Sardikul*. Here in the hollow of a walnut tree there is a very old idol of goddess Sarda. Its dimensions are 2ftx1½ft with height 1½ft. There is an old stone here, which carries the imprint of goddess Sarda. It is believed that the goddess halted here during her journey to Sardi, the place where massive temple stands today. Around the walnut tree stands erected a temple.

The Ishtadevi of Ramchand Goban's family was originally 'Zala goddess. One day Ram Chand's mother, then a girl of fourteen years, happened to pass by. She saw goddess Sarda sitting in the hollow of a walnut tree. She bowed before the goddess. The latter asked her what she wished. Ramchand's mother said she desired a child. The goddess told her in that case the child should worship Sarda as Ishtadevi. After nine months Ramchand was born. All other uncles of Ramchand have Zala as Ishtadevi, while Sarda is Ishtadevi of Ramchand's family.

Mata Hari asthapan is located in a forest in Sewer village. A small rivulet which emanates from the forest forms a spring, 8ftx8ft. The spring is square in shape with a very old Shivling and few idols in it. Pandits of Sewer used to go every morning, have bath and would then apply tilak of white clay found there. At eastern end of Sewer village on a Karewa is a place called Haran, derived from Hari. There is no habitation there. After the harvest, Pandits would prepare yellow rice from new paddy and take it to Hari Ashthapan.

*Naranag*, in Sewer, has three *kunds* with idols in these. Water comes from under the idols. The idols were broken during the turbulence of 1947. Naranag is situated one km away from Sewer on way to Vernav in Chak village, in Tantrey mohalla. It is believed any desecration invites trouble. A person had slaughtered a cock. He turned blind and was afflicted with leprosy. None from his family survived. The deserted house of this family is a perpetual remainder of the strong Vaishnav character of this spring. Pandits would visit this spring on *ashtmi* and *pujnim* days.

Amarnath cave, called by locals as *Ambriyun* is located on a hill, towards Vernav, two kms from Sewer. The cave is 15 ft. down and requires the use of a special staircase, or Kengur. One has to find way through stone debris. Because of debris, the other end cannot be reached. As per local tradition, this cave is older than Amarnath, located in Pahalgam Himalayas.



### **‘Raaz Kath’ Tradition:**

There are a number of asthapanas near Dardnag nullah adjacent to Saridkul. ‘Raazkath’ ritual is also performed here. ‘Raaz Sahib’ or Nandkeshwar of Sogam has come to Sogam with Bal Sogami, the ancestor of late Lakshman and Kailash Reshi. This family was appointed custodians of Ganesh nag by Maharaja Pratap Singh with Rs three as pay per month. They also looked after Puja here.

As per legend, Bal Sogami belonged to Sogam and was a patwari by profession. He had to visit the headquarters at Srinagar of and on. Patwaris of Kamraz would go together to Srinagar by boat from Sopore. Once Sogami missed the boat when he reached late in the evening. He proceeded on foot. It was dark when he reached Noorbag. He saw a fire lit there and sat down to warm himself up. There was also a *sadhu*, who was roasting meat and eating it. He also offered a piece to Sogami. The latter would take it but would not eat. He kept it in his pheran pocket. The *sadhu* asked him if he had taken the meat. Sogami said in affirmative. The *sadhu* asked him to give that back. He obeyed. Astonished, the *sadhu* asked him, ‘you have remained hungry’. He added, “I will sleep now. Put this white sheet (Kapar Chadar) over me.”

Bal Sogami put the sheet over *sadhu*. The sheet failed to cover his whole body. Sometimes his legs would lengthen and at other times his head. Sogami then decided to cut the portion of the body not covered by sheet, with knife he was carrying with him. *Sadhu* asked, “what the hell you are doing”. Sogami replied, “sometimes you are elongating your head and sometimes your legs. I will cut the portion not covered by the sheet”.

This impressed the *sadhu* that Sogami was a strong-willed person and spiritually elevated too. He entered into discussions with Sogami. He handed Sogami a twig of a mulberry tree, Tulmoor. *Sadhu* further instructed him, “when you reach home, next morning at sunrise a crow on the branch of a tree will crow. At that, you plant the ‘Tulmoor’ from the opposite (tihri) side. I will come there”.

Next morning, when Sogami was preparing to leave for Sopore, *Sadhu* (Raaz Sahib) asked him to close his eyes and stand on his wooden sandal, khraiv. *Sadhu* instructed him to open his eyes only when he ordered. After fifteen minutes the wooden sandal had disappeared and Sogami was standing at the Reshipeer temple ghat, Yarbali, Sopore. There is a nine-feet Shivling here in the temple. The other *patwaris* who went by boat reached only by noon.

Sogami planted the Tulmoor as instructed by *sadhu* at Nandkeshwar. Today this Tulmoor has grown into a big tree with branches on all sides. There are thorny bushes, *Zand* all around. Sogami clan had to sacrifice one sheep every year in the month of Poh. The day chosen is Tuesday or Saturday. The skin of the sheep is hung on the mulberry tree. Feet (patchi) and head (Kalheer) are also mixed because it is *Bhairav Buzan*. No turmeric or masala is added. The meat is prepared at home in the afternoon and later brought to place, where Tulmoor was planted. Puja is done. As per tradition meat prepared is to be taken in clay plates, Takus. In Sogam even for one-day old children Bhog is kept. Only earthen utensils are used for cooking. It is cooked in wok, leij. In Sogam people are allowed to take home the *prasad*, *navid*. Ladies are not allowed to go to Nand Keshwar. Only unmarried girls below ten years of age can visit Raaz Sahib.

It is said Raaz Saab was so kind to Sogami’s family that they did not have to purchase rations for twelve years. Every morning the lady of the house would take out from earthen drum, mati the rations to be cooked for the day. One day the secret was divulged by the daughter-in-law of the family. The divine kindness evaporated. As per Sogam Pandits, the similar benevolence had been bestowed by Sardamata on Ram Chand ‘Gobans’ family. His mother used to take out rations from the store, Kuchi every morning for ten long years. The rations never finished.

Recently, an armyman during patrolling might have committed some desecration near Raaz Saab’. He turned mad. Ganai, an old wise man of the village suggested to the army that they should offer a sheep to ‘Raaz Saab’. The armyman was cured. It has been reported that few Muslim families have also offered sheep to Raaz Sahib during these turbulent days.

*\*The author is a keen researcher on Kashmir's cultural tradition.*

## 8 Web of corruption in J&K

### By David Devadas

Some weeks before the elections to the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly, a government employed doctor told me his chief reason for wanting to see the Farooq Abdullah government defeated was corruption. "It has crossed all bounds", said he earnestly, pointing to a recent scandal in his own department.

A hundred-odd brooms had been dispatched as equipment for his village primary health centre the previous year, he said, paid for at a rate three times higher than the one at Srinagar's wholesale markets. They just lay in a store room, for the centre had no need for so many brooms. Clearly, those in charge of making purchase for the department had made a killing, supply thousands of brooms to health centers across the state.

Now that kind of scam might seem like par for the course for many citizens of south Asia. After all, billions of rupees were spent to purchase cattle fodder by a government department in Bihar not so long ago. The difference is that Kashmiris seem to resent corruption more keenly than most other south Asians. While corruption rarely becomes a major electoral issue in most parts of the subcontinent, it has often been a major issue for determining voting patterns here.

The irony of course is that corruption is endemic in Kashmir—and has been for as long as anyone can remember. Older Kashmiris remember how, even under the tight controls of Dogra rule, marriage proposals for petty government employees were accompanied by information about how much the proposed groom's "*upar ki aamdani* (extra income)" was.

There was talk of corruption around the distribution of forest felling leases to relatives of Sheikh Abdullah even during his first stint in power, before 1953, and corruption became a most potent political point against the most dynamic and efficient Kashmiri leader of recent times, Bakshi Ghulam MOhammed. No doubt the issue could be so effectively raked up because his political antagonists ran various governments which did not escape the anger of accusing fingers either. The legend is still to be heard of 30,000 egg yolks from the government hatchery having been mixed with paint to add sheen to the outer walls of the bungalow of one of those successors.

Such charges have not only been levelled against Kashmir's top leaders. Corruption is virtually a way of life. It crops up at every step, not only in government offices but in personal interactions too. I had an amazing experience a couple of years ago. A leading fruit merchant had been telling me of the corrupt practices through which Kashmiri merchants were exploited at Delhi's wholesale fruit market. When I asked him for more facts and figures so that I could write about it, he beamed and asked me how much he would be paid for the information. At first I thought he was joking but then realised that he was miffed with me for refusing to strike a deal. He seemed to think I had been wasting his time and did not seem to see any contradiction between his wanting to be paid so that I could highlight injustices of which he was a victim. His motto obviously was that no opportunity to make some money was to be lost.

There is a strange contradiction between the fervent moral outrage that most Kashmiris express about the scourge of corruption and the widespread indulgence in it, often by those who bemoan the trend among the rest of society. Perhaps this forked attitude explains what a military intelligence man once told me.

Contractors elsewhere deliver in a slovenly way even after taking a cut for themselves. In Kashmir, he claimed, the cut is extremely generous but, even if only a tenth of the sanctioned amount is actually spent on the work, it is delivered with exquisite grace and hospitality.

The concerned officer may be treated to a lavish meal, and gifts for his family when the work is delivered, punctually. It is almost an art, perhaps these are the hallmarks of an evolved ancient civilisation that has, in decay, lost its moral moorings but not the trappings of civilised form. These also have to do with the extent to which the practice of Islam in the Valley has moved away from fundamentals to focus heavily on the intercession of pirs and other saints for favours from the Almighty. There is, after all, an element of bribery in promising to present a brocade sheet for the grave of a saint if one gets a lucrative job or admission to a prized institution or a son.

Religion being the fountain-head of morality and standards of behaviour in any society, corrupted religious practices may well lead to distorted perspectives on social conduct.

In Kashmir, these factors have created a situation in which personal morals have been blunted but the awareness of a general social malaise remains bitterly sharp.

*(Source: The Tribune)*

## 9 Khirm, Sirhama-1948

*When a Dacoity looked like 'Raiders' attack*

**By Kuldeep Raina**

SIRHAMA and Khirm are the two picturesque villages located on Bijbehara-Pahalgam road. Khirm is the last Kashmiri village, which opens above into Ashtadhar-Wularhama forests. While Khirm is one and a half km away from Sirhama, the latter is close to the main road and nine kms from the tehsil headquarters of Bijbehara.

Sirhama, derived from Suryahama has remained a great centre of Sun-Worship in by-gone times and also finds mention in the Amreshvar Mahatmya.

In 1948 there were eighteen Pandit families-all Bhats, who lived in Sirhama. There were just six Pandit families, Rainas and Bhats in Khirm. It was the first day of the moon-lit fortnight of Savan and the other day villagers were going to celebrate Idd. The impact of the raiders' attack was still fresh in the minds of people, as raiders had been pushed across just three months back.

### **Attack:**

In the evening, villagers had come out of their houses to look for the moon. A few Pandits had also joined them. Moon had been sighted, but suddenly the tranquility was disturbed by the shouts of Jia Lal, son of Thokur Bhat. He was trying to warn the villagers that the raiders had come. The villagers thought he was making fool of them. Soon the sound of a firing shot was also heard. It was around 8 PM and darkness was gradually setting in.

The raiders' had the reputation of looting and killing Kashmiri Pandits. When the first news of "raiders" reached Sirhama, Gh. Qadir Dar had come out with a lamp in his hand. He was going to invite the "raiders" to his home for dinner so as to give time to Pandits to flee. As the light of the lamp made the movement of "raiders" visible, the intruders got annoyed and fired at Gh Qadir. A bullet hit him in the abdomen and he collapsed down.

The family of late Sat Lal Bhat had a marriage function to be solemnized the following month. They had stocked everything for this purpose. After the firing shot was heard, the family shifted the women-folk to the house of a neighbour Ghani Nengroo. Sham Lal Bhat, son of late Sat Lal Bhat hid himself among the bhang bushes. His two brothers, Gopi Nath and Shamboo Nath accompanied other Pandits, who went to inform police. Mirza Afzal Beg, the Revenue Minister was also camping in Anantnag. After half an hour, the family managed to retrieve 4-5 boxes, containing valuables and hid these in the bushes.

### **Massacre:**

Soon three more shots were heard. Sat Bhat, Raghav Bhat and Tarachand were closely related. Their houses formed sort of a single complex. These families were taking dinner. They used to keep bore-firearms to protect maize from bears. 'Raiders', numbering 10-15 in number forced their way into their houses. They called Sat Bhat, Tarachand and Raghav Bhat down and lined them up. Sat Bhat was shot in the temple. He died on spot. Raghav Bhat was injured in the thigh. Tarachand was lucky and received a mere kissing injury.

'Raiders' went to search all the Pandit houses in the locality. It took them three hours. Gold and double blankets (Jora Pachi) were special attractions for looters. Ladies handed over *Tulsi*, *Talraz* and *Dejhoors*. The 'raiders' broke upon the metal boxes to see if any money was hidden. A family had hidden silver coins in ash in a wok. This was taken away.

Raiders also thrashed few Muslims. When raiders entered the house of late Sat Lal Bhat, Razak Rather, the numberdar had tried to mislead them. He told them the house belonged to a Muslim family. Rather was thrashed by the raiders. Few pushtu-speaking villagers from the neighbouring Dodu were moving with the raiders and possibly helping in the identification.

The Muslim families had also fled from their homes. Only the brave ones had stayed behind. Injured Raghav had been taken by the villagers to the hospital in Bijbehara. The incident created tremendous fear



among the villagers, who did not dare enter their houses again. When the raiders first reached Sirhama, they had tried to befriend local Muslims, telling them to save their lives. The killing of Qadir Dar was ample warning to Pandits that no one could save them.

**Khirm:**

From Sirhama the 'raiders' went to loot Khirm Pandits. The Pandits had taken dinner and gone to sleep. Mrs. Gopi Nath Raina, holding her 2½ year old son in her lap was still awake. There was a gentle knock at the door. It was Nand Lal. Before Mrs. Gopi Nath could respond, he left to knock at the door of Narayan Joo. Nandlal told Narayan Joo that raiders had reached Sirhama. He had gone to Sirhama to meet the Patwari. Nandlal added that the raiders had already killed two people in Sirhama and advised him to immediately shift the family somewhere. Naryanan Joo felt terribly disturbed. Nandlal also woke up other Pandit families. Sona Kak's family escaped to the neighbouring Ashtadhar forests. Naryanan Joo's family and others escaped to surrounding villages.

The 'raiders' fired a few more shots. Sona Kak's two sons Amarnath and Dina Nath came down from the forest to find out what the firing was all about. When they reached home, they found two raiders' standing guard at the main door of the house. Other 'raiders' had gone in to collect the loot. The raiders took Amarnath and Dina Nath as captives.

Meanwhile their brother Gopi Nath also reached home. He too was caught. Somehow Dina Nath managed to escape. After bringing the looted goods down, they packed these into bundles. They then went to loot other Pandits houses of the locality. Nidhan Bhat, son of Bhagwan Dass and Shavjee, son of Thokar Ram were also taken as hostages.

Gh. Mohd. Bhat was among the first to learn that raiders were likely to come to Khirm. His in-laws lived in Sirhama and they had intimidated him. Gh. Mohd. decided to inform Pandits. Before he could reach Pandits' locality, the raiders caught hold of him. They asked him to show his house. He was a rich man. The 'raiders', information was accurate as they were guided by the Pushtu-speaking locals from Dodi. Gh. Mohd. led the raiders to some other house. As the raiders entered that house, Gh. Mohd. escaped.

The 'Raiders' loaded the looted goods on the shoulders of Amarnath, Gopinath, Nidhan Bhat and fled towards forest. The 'raiders' told Amarnath since he was a bachelor they would try to arrange a match for him. When raiders and the hostages had walked 8 kms, they decided to rest. Hasan Gujar, the tenant of Sona Kak lived here. The 'raiders' demanded food from him. 'Raiders' were four in number, while others were locals from Dodi. One of these locals was quit friendly to the hostages. They too decided to befriend him and requested him to help them escape. The local man from Dodi told them, "Sirhama Pandits have gone to inform the police. When the police will come, I will blow the whistle. You should run away then."

**Police Station:**

Meanwhile Sirhama Pandit delegation met Mirza Afzal Beg and related what had happened. Gopi Nath, son of late Sat Lal Bhat was a good friend of the Revenue Minister. Mirza Beg told Pandits, "How is this possible that the raiders have descended on Sirhama. We have already pushed them back". The Revenue Minister made them wait till 5 AM. Mirza Afzal Beg along with a big contingent of police left for Sirhama at 5 AM. Why the police was not sent immediately remains a mystery? Sirhama Pandits had met Mirza Beg at 9 PM. The police force under the leadership of SHO Prithvi Nath 'doctor' chased the 'raiders' right upto Gutli Bagh. The dacoits threw the looted goods into Sindh. One of the dacoits was reported killed. As soon as the police reinforcements reached the foot of Ashtadhar forest, the Dodi local whistled the hostages to run away. They freed themselves as the 'raiders' were deep asleep and began descending down through the short-routes.

When the hostages reached Herakhal, the local maidan, the whole Khirm had assembled to give them a grand reception. They embraced and fondled them in sheer joy. It looked like a festive occasion. The villagers accompanied the freed people to their homes.

**Retrospection:**

Earlier in the morning Dina Nath, son of Sona Kak (Khirm) had brought his family from Ashtadhar forests to home. A family member recalled, "It looked as if ghosts had descended down on our house. Clay and dust was all strewn around. The looters had broke open the boxes and made topsy-turvy of these. They had taken away everything".

In Sirhama not only Pandit ladies had gone in hiding but the whole village had taken shelter in the neighbouring villages of Mahind, Nowshehr, Hogam and Wapzan.

As the dust settled down, people and the administrators began re-thinking on the entire episode. Was it a raiders' attack or simply a dacoity committed under the guise of raiders? Surmises were made that the attack may have been the handiwork of some group of raiders, who may have stayed back. Others said the 'raiders' were from Gutlibagh, a village inhabited by Pathans. Some generations ago, few of these Pathans had come to Marhama (Dodi) and settled there. The two groups may have collaborated to commit a dacoity. As the raid was fresh in the public mind, the dacoits used it as a cover. Lastly the terrain was also favourable. Sirhama is the first entry point into the forest, while Khirm was the last village. In Kashmir myths and the history mingle too often.

*\*The author is General Secretary, Panun Kashmir*

## 10 *Palestinians of India*

**By G.S. Bhargava**

'Palestinians' has collectively become a byword for persons hounded out of their homes and surviving as refugees in their own country. From the time of the implementation of the Balfour Declaration in 1948 and establishment of Israel as a Jewish homeland on what was earlier Palestine, the Palestinians have had varied images. Sometimes they were marked down as terrorists who staged daring hijacking of Western and Israeli civilian aircraft or killed and maimed Israelis whenever an opportunity arose. The skyjacking of a Libyan aircraft that ended in the spectacular Entebbe rescue operation and the massacre of Israeli sportspersons at the Munich Olympiad stand out in that connection. Despite their desperate efforts, the Palestinians have remained victims of eviction from homes and denial of repatriation. Deprivation has become their middle name.

Backed by the resources and organisation of international Jewry, there had been organised immigration into what was Palestine of Jews from the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe—as also the victims of the 1930s Nazi persecution dispersed in different countries. Sizeable numbers of them were smuggled in violation of the administration. In the process, the Palestinians were uprooted and driven out, offsetting any satisfaction that the Jews had found a home.

It was in 1989-90 when Mufti Mohammad Sayeed was the Union Home Minister and his nominee Jagmohan was the Governor of Jammu and Kashmir that the Pandits from the Valley were hounded out of their homes. First targeted for attacks and killings, men, women and children had to flee what had been their home for centuries. It was said the essence of *Kashmiriyat* or the Kashmiri way of life was that Muslims and Hindus would live in harmony. It was Sufi-based eclectic Islam distinct from what obtained in the rest of India and Pakistan. In pursuance of the repudiation of *Kashmiriyat* there were heinous crimes attributed to the Hizbul Mujahideen. They included the assassination of Mirwaiz Maulvi Mohammed Farooq (1992), the burning down of the Muslim shrine of Charar-e-Sharif (1995) and the slaughter of 23 Kashmiri Pandits, including nine women and four children (1998). The security forces, particularly the much-maligned Border Security Force (BSF), were conveniently blamed for them. The cruellest irony was Maulvi Farooq, the present Mirwaiz, supping with the assassins of his father. He had been the President of the 'secular' All-Parties Hurriyat Conference, which included the Jamaat-i-Islami also.

The former Mirwaiz and his uncle Mirwaiz Yusuf were bitter enemies of Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah, Mirwaiz Yusuf was the leader of the Muslim Conference pitted against the National Conference. He had fled to Pakistan after the accession of Jammu and Kashmir to India. Presumably the atrocities against the Pandits were meant to test the depth of Maulvi Farooq's commitment to Pakistan; to see how far he would go in repudiating *Kashmiriyat*. Equally probable was the claim that they were the work of Pakistani and other mercenaries to widen the wedge between the Kashmir Liberation Front, agitating for autonomy, and the pro-Pakistan insurgents. Soon after, there were clashes between locals and foreigners within the Hizbul which led to the formation of Al-Badr.

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In this context, it is necessary to distinguish between Pandits, who had collaborated with the Dogra rulers against the National Conference, and the present-day "the nowhere people"—the apt expression for 'internally displaced persons' in a recent publication edited by Siby Tharakhan and published in Bangalore.

The Pandits of the Dogra period had a vested interest in keeping intact the autocratic rule of the Maharaja because they had the lion's share of benefits from the regime. Ramchandra Kak, the last Pandit Dewan of the Maharaja—replaced by Gopaldaswami Ayyangar as the Dogra dynasty came to an end—personified that attitude. Nikhil Chakravarty, in a series of articles published in *Mainstream* in September 1967, had given a graphic account of religion-based discrimination practised by the Dogra ruler. Plum posts in the administration and a disproportionate share of educational opportunities went to the Pandits at the cost of

the majority Muslims. Among the nuggets in Nikhil-*da's* writings is that Makhanlal Fotedar was one of the leaders of a black flag demonstration staged against Nehru's visit to the State in 1946.

Incidentally, Fotedar was Indira Gandhi's pointsman in her dealings with Jammu and Kashmir and played a key role in the dismissal of the Farooq Government by her in 1984. He was also close to Rajiv Gandhi, even if an errand man. BK Nehru vividly describes in his memoirs Fotedar's role in souring the Centre's relations with Jammu and Kashmir. Mufti Mohammad Sayeed as the chief of the State Congress Committee was a collaborator in the anti-Farooq manoeuvre.

There is no agreement on the number of Pandits housed in refugee camps in Jammu and Delhi. The Pandits put it at as high as over 300,000 while the Kashmir government would say they were about 200,000. Whatever their number, they represent the suffering humanity whose plight was no fault of theirs. When Saifuddin Soz was a minister in the United Front government I asked when the Pandits would be able to go back to their homes. He was then in the National Conference. He promised that they would be rehabilitated in the Valley and compensated. It did not happen under the Farooq government.

During a visit to north Kashmir in 1995, I saw the properties abandoned by the Pandits taken over by Muslims. It was the same story in Kupwara, Baramulla and also Srinagar city. The new owners were not willing to vacate the houses. Nor was the situation conducive to the Pandits living in peace and security if they returned. The terrorists had dealt a deathblow to *Kashmiriyat*.

The Pandits boycotted to a man the recent Assembly elections. Fewer votes were cast in the special polling booths set up for them in Udhampur, Jammu and Delhi. Analysts ignored the development even while they dilated on the poor turnout in parts of the Valley on account of the Hurriyat's poll-boycott call. The pandits' protest was not under the fear of gun or on the basis of a formal boycott campaign. It was spontaneous and universal.

The common minimum programme of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) and the Congress, to be formed has promised to ensure the return of the Pandits to their homes. It is also to establish a Minorities Commission for them—laudable moves. But one keeps one's fingers crossed until there is action on the ground.

—Source: *Mainstream*

## 11 *Abdullah, Bazaz and Hamdard*

**By Shyam Kaul**

It is a paradox while Pandit Prem Nath Bazaz, an outstanding intellectual that Kashmir produced during the twentieth century, was an anathema to his own community of Kashmiri Pandits, he was not well-liked by large sections of Muslims either. Pandits, in general, detest the role he played in Kashmir politics, and Muslims blamed him of having acted as an "evil" influence on Sheikh Abdullah in converting him to secular and nationalistic political thinking. At one stage, Pandits considered him a renegade for having acted against the interests of the community as a member of Galancy Commission, which in 1932 inquired into the issue of representation in the government services. On the other hand many Muslim political observers described him as an "agent" of Pandit Nehru in Kashmir.

Bazaz himself referred to this predicament in his speech at the special session of Jammu Kashmir Muslim Conference in June 1939, when it was resolved to allow the entry of non-Muslims into the party, paving the way for its conversion to Jammu Kashmir National Conference. He said that since Pandits had "expelled" him from the community, they felt he was doing things harmful to them, while, on the other hand, Muslims considered him to be a "spy" planted by Pandits to damage the Muslim, interests.

These conflicting views, notwithstanding, it is a fact that Bazaz played the most vital role in the "conversion" of Sheikh Abdullah to secular politics, one of the many consequences of which was that Muslim Conference become National Conference and many prominent non-Muslims joined the party.

Writing about Sheikh Abdullah and other leaders of the day, Mohammed Yusuf Saraf, author of *Kashmir Fights for Freedom*, writes, "It was Bazaz who was able to impress upon them (Sheikh and others) that the real tussle was not between the Hindu masses and the Muslim masses, but between the rich as against the poor, and between the ruled and the ruler, irrespective of being Hindus and Muslims".

Bazaz and Sheikh were no strangers to each other. They had been classmates, though their association had not gone beyond formal acquaintance. In July 1932 they had a chance meeting at which the two of them decided to meet at Chesham Shahi garden, near Srinagar, for detailed discussion on current affairs in the state. They met within a week and after a "frank and heart to heart discussion", they "finally resolved that Kashmir freedom movement will be conducted on secular, progressive and democratic lines".

No doubt, Bazaz had political ambitions, but going by the developments that followed his close association with Sheikh Abdullah, one gets a feeling that more than political ambition, it was an idealist's dream that brought him into active politics. He dreamed of a Kashmir free of communal strife, economic exploitation, social inequality and political subjugation.

He was looking for an honest, upright, unselfish, secular and broadminded leadership, and when he interacted with Sheikh Abdullah, he believed that he had found his leader, the one he had been dreaming of.

Within three years of his close association with Sheikh Abdullah, Bazaz wrote his first book in 1935, *Kashmir Ka Gandhi*, in which he described the Sheikh as the "chief hero of Kashmir movement" and also the most respected man among the Muslims, who conferred on him the title of the Lion of Kashmir.

"No one in the history of Kashmir", wrote Bazaz, "has enjoyed so much popularity with the masses as he (Sheikh)". With such adulation, it was natural for Bazaz to have very high expectations from his "hero". But during the course of years, things went the wrong way, leading to his disillusionment.

Pandit Bazaz and Sheikh Abdullah launched weekly *Hamdard* at a largely attended public meeting at Hazuri Bagh, with a veteran Congress leader, Saifudin Kichloo, doing the inauguration.

For Bazaz, *Hamdard* was to act as "a standard-bearer of democracy and unity of all Kashmiris, without any consideration of caste or creed they profess".

"The *Hamdard*", wrote Bazaz later, "stood alone, a class by itself. It was mainly through the sober, thoughtful and inspiring writings this weekly that Muslim Conference was converted into National Conference in 1939".



Penmanship and journalism were in the blood of Bazaz. Politics came after that. In 1927 he had sought permission to start a weekly from Srinagar (in Jammu publication of Ranbir had been allowed in 1922) but his petition was turned down. In 1932 after the state gained some freedom of expression. Bazaz launched an Urdu daily, *Vitasta*, which, however, ceased publication after a year.

Sheikh Abdullah was as enthusiastic in launching *Hamdard* as was Bazaz. Before the paper was started he wrote to his friends seeking their support for the success of the venture.

It is an irony that within a few years of the launching of *Hamdard*, Abdullah and Bazaz drifted apart, and the same weekly raised its voice against the "goondaism and gangsterism" of National Conference of which Bazaz wrote later that "it had ceased to be a revolutionary nationalist body which had come into existence to express the inner urge of suppressed and tyrannised masses and to fight for the freedom for the country".

He said no more could those people support him (Sheikh) whose only aim in life was the emancipation of their motherland from alien dominance and freedom of Kashmiris from political, social, economic and spiritual thralldom".

Bazaz resigned from National Conference working committee in November 1940 and from the party itself a few months later. He was not the only one to get disillusioned there were others too, like Kashyap Bandhu, who also parted ways with the National Conference in protest against the tendency of its top leader to mix religion and politics and exploit religious forums for political ends.

There also came a day when, speaking at the funeral of a party worker. Salam Darzi, killed in *Sher Bakra* clashes, Sheikh Abdullah, to quote Bazaz, "advocated violence as the only means of ending the opponents of National Conference".

Among these opponents of the party, Sheikh Abdullah, included "the leaders of Muslims Conference and *Yuvak Sabha*, and editors of two dailies, *Hamdard and Martand*."

*Hamdard* was a crusade journal in the cause of secularism, democracy and progressive thinking. During twelve years of its existence, first as a weekly and then as a daily, it went through a chain of ups and downs, the like to which no other newspaper had gone through. It faced closure, fines, censorship and all other hurdles. Once the paper was asked to furnish cash security or face closure. An appeal was issued to the readers who promptly responded by raising the required amount of money to enable the paper to continue with its publication. This is unique instance of its kind in the history of journalism in this state.

In the words of Yusuf Saraf, "the best newspaper with largest circulations was the daily *Hamdard*..it presentation, as well as views on various topics of political interest were always balanced, admirable and interesting."

"Through his writings", writes Sufi Mohiudin (*History of Journalism in Kashmir*), "he (Bazaz) made *Hamdard* the most popular journal of Kashmir...With the death of *Hamdard* ended the historical pre-partition era of Kashmir's politics and journalism".

True to his word, Bazaz always used *Hamdard* as a powerful weapon and medium to espouse the cause of secularism and democracy to which he had committed himself right in the beginning. He made no compromises, not even at the cost of the closure of his newspapers, followed by imprisonment and extermment from the state.

During the crucial years of late thirties and early forties, *Hamdard* on the one hand, kept the Maharaja's government on tenterhooks by its sharp and critical writings, and, on the other, it was equally unsparing to Sheikh Abdullah, whose party workers were often described as "fascists, hooligans, gangsters, and ruffians. There came a time when the National Conference supporters ran out of patience and an abortive attempt was made on the life of Bazaz. Three National Conference workers were arrested and tried. The assassination bid did not deter Bazaz from his commitment to fearless and objective journalism. When he returned to work from the hospital, he declared in his first editorial that he had escaped death only to "continue his fight against the fascism of Sheikh Abdullah and destroy it".

Cast in the mould of pre-independence generation of high-principled political activists, Bazaz had set before himself high standards of politics, especially in such vital matters as democracy and secularism. He applied similar standards to his colleagues also, who, he believed, were destined to lead Kashmir through the crucial years, preceding and following independence. It was here that he suffered disillusionment and failure as a politician.

Noted journalists, Shamim Ahmed Shamim, put it aptly in a write-up on Bazaz in weekly *Aina* in 1969, when he wrote, "unfortunately Bazaz has been undone by his own enlightenment".

Bazaz, however, never gave up reminding Sheikh Abdullah to respect democratic norms. When the Kashmir leader was released from jail after GM Sadiq took over as the prime minister of Jammu and Kashmir, Bazaz sent a telegram to him. It read, "you have braved many storms but the heaviest one is ahead. Cautious steering and tolerance for dissent can save democracy from drowning. Pray, act prudently or one false step may turn victory into defeat".

The two of them came closer again during state people's convention in Srinagar in 1968, but nothing much came out of this brief association. Sheikh Abdullah finally returned to power in 1975.

In 1977, circumstances, drew Bazaz once again into the vortex of Kashmir politics and he joined some of his old colleagues, including GMD Kara and Maulana Masoodi, to take on Sheikh Abdullah in the assembly elections held that year.

Evidently to settle old scores, Bazaz, soon after his arrival in Srinagar to join the election fray as one of its managers, declared, "I shall bend all my energy to see that in the forthcoming elections, democracy emerges triumphant, defeating the forces of high-handedness, hooliganism and despotic rule". It was all reminiscent of the forties when Bazaz had fought his battle against what he called gangsterism, goondalism and fascism of National Conference with his powerful weapon, *Hamdard*.

But it was Sheikh Abdullah who emerged triumphant from the contest with his erstwhile colleagues and old stalwarts, including PN Bazaz, whom he had once called his "respected and dear friend". Sheikh Abdullah enjoyed political power till his death in 1982. And Bazaz was yet again a disillusioned man.

Bazaz's biographer and son, Nagin Bazaz, has described the whole event as "a faux pax" saying that "he (Bazaz) had committed mistakes in the past, there had been aberrations, but not a blunder of such magnitude".

*\*The author is Veteran Journalist and J&K Bureau Chief of Quami Awaz and National Herald.*

## 12 Kashmiri Rudali's false tears

### By Muzamil Jaleel

ON December 18 a group of militants barged into the house of Ghulam Qadir Dar in Reban village. They collected the family in a room and opened indiscriminate fire, killing four including a four-year-old child. Their crime: two militants, hiding in Dar's crowd, had been killed by the army last month and the militants suspected that Dar's son had tipped off the forces, a 'justification' to wipe out the entire family.

On December 19 three teenage girls were gunned down in Rajouri. They had to be killed because they had not heeded to the diktat of the moral police on wearing the burqa. The police said the reason behind the murder of these three girls was not disobedience to the burqa diktat but a suspicion that they were security forces informers.

The latest tragedy of us Kashmiris and our so-called leadership is our selective silence on these brutal incidents.

December 5 was Eid day. The whole of Brangdara village, angry and agitated was on road protesting the atrocity committed by an officer of the local army unit. Army men opened fire on the protesters, killing one and injuring three others. Next morning, the villagers blocked the road and a huge contingent of 'saviours of Kashmiris' from Shabir Shah to the Hurriyat leadership rushed to the spot to join the protests. Human Rights--they cried in unison--had been violated.

However, when the entire family of Ghulam Qadir Dar was massacred by militants in Sopore village, the family mourned their tragedy alone. Nobody sympathised with them. Nobody came out on the roads. Nobody protested. There were no calls of protest from the Hurriyat. No leader visited the family. This cold-blooded massacre was not even mentioned in street corner gossip. In the volatile town of Sopore, it was business as usual. An anxious parent said that for years, he had justified the murders in Kashmir as part of the 'freedom struggle' but when the perpetrators are among us, it is hard to explain.

Kashmiris--and I know they are a minority--who did dare to talk about this brutality did it behind the closed doors of their homes. Fear is a genuine problem but this mass and selective silence amounts to actually condoning such massacres.

Murder as a punishment for not wearing burqa is chilling because it does not merely demonstrate militant anger, it also reveals the high level of intolerance of people who wish to use terror as a tactic to implement a social agenda. This had happened earlier in the Valley as well when the faces of three girls in downtown Srinagar were sprayed with acid.

The irony is that the core demand of the struggle of the separatists in Kashmir is seen to be the right to make choices. Kashmiris, they plead, have been deprived of the right to choose their own fate. And when anybody disagrees with them on an issue like burqa-disfiguring of the face by acid or death is seen as the only answer.

Over the past few years, Hurriyat has emerged as nothing but Rudalis--professional mourners--while reacting to violent incidents in Kashmir. They come out on the streets, they shed tears and cry hoarse about human rights violations committed against Kashmiris only after the perpetrators have been classed in the recognizable category of 'enemies'. But when the finger of suspicion is on the 'boys with guns', they prefer to remain silent or take refuge in conspiracy theories. A senior Hurriyat leader when confronted with the Reban massacre, talked about conspiracy and asked for a probe to ascertain the identity of the perpetrators. He even said that the killings will automatically stop once a meaningful process of addressing the Kashmir issue takes off. But even if the identity of the perpetrators remains controversial, the intensity of the tragedy is still the same.

Only occasionally does the separatist leadership condemn violent acts but they never protest. But what is more dangerous is the lack of a spontaneous reaction from the common people. Unless the people react to brutality irrespective of the identity of the attackers, Kashmir can never dream of an end to the vicious cycle of death. Silence as a reaction to any sort of violence is nothing but tacit approval. *Source: Indian Express*



## 13 A Decade of Devastation

### By Ashutosh Sapru

When I left Srinagar on 22 January 1990, I was in my 20s. I was escorting my sister to Delhi. We had to leave because three days before, militants had given a call for *jehad* across the Valley. Kashmiri Pandits, soft targets, were reluctantly trickling out. There was no doubt in my mind that I would be returning in a few days for my final-year college exams.

It took me 13 years to return.

When I was asked to go back to Srinagar for this special *HT* Sunday magazine story, I felt a mixture of many emotions: primarily excitement, fear, anticipation.

#### Day 1- A decade of devastation

As the plane scissored over the Pir Panjal ranges pointing me home, a mist as wet as a December morning of my birthplace fogged my eyes. Naively, I tried to clean the window as we landed at Srinagar. Out in the bracing 8-degree wind, I ran straight into the warm arms of my friend Fayaz.

Everything went by in slow motion, cushioning me from changes wrought by over a decade of devastation and creation. From the car; I saw greenery had given way to a mushrooming of bright new yellow, red and blue houses. We passed the majestic bungalow of Jamat-e-Islami leader Syed Ali Shah Geelani. Hordes of gun-toting security personnel crisscrossed the streets. Bunkers punctuated every corner and crossing. I rattled off names of roads, to show that for me, nothing had changed. Or so I wanted to believe.

"Can we Kashmiri Pandits come back home now?" I asked. Fayaz assured me everything was normal.

But was it? Is it?

We stopped at my college. The principal and teachers were all there-as if time had stood still, only adding grey to hair and wrinkles to skin. Masood *sahib* took me to his room and other teachers steamed in. Soon, I was weeping shamelessly in the arms of Aftab Ahmed, my drawing teacher, and his eyes mirrored mine. I collected the addresses of my classmates and friends, and left with a dinner invitation from Masood *sahib*.

Leaving my luggage at the hotel, I walked out to Lal Chowk for a cup of coffee at my favourite Shakti Sweets. College girls and boys, hipper than I remembered, chattered in Urdu, rather than Kashmiri, over snacks and music. Walking back, I saw a security guard push three boys out from an autorickshaw with the muzzle of his gun, for a thorough frisking. People here have got used to it, but to me it seemed they lived in a huge prison, moving within walls tightly guarded by the police.

That night at Masood *sahib's* house, a smouldering *kangri* and hot *kahwa* melted away the dark and cold. We began to talk politics--what could we blame the misfortune of my generation of Kashmiri Pandits on?

It was the reason I had come back. Had we left without the dignity of a memory? Had we left behind a vacuum irreplaceable by ideology or power games? Or had we been routed, like in any old battle, stripped of honour and possessions, never to return without the use of equal force?

"Do you miss us--the Kashmiri Pandits?"

Replied Masood *sahib*, "In our heart of hearts we feel your absence". He said common people felt nothing had been achieved by militancy. But undeniably, the chasm between Pandits and Muslims has widened irreparably.

Masood *sahib* and his wife dropped me back--it is now safer to go out with one's wife after dark. There is no middle ground to stop at here; people oscillate like pendulums, between work and home, safety and fear.

## Day 2-House hunting

You might remember the Shankaracharya Temple from *Mission Kashmir*. As a schoolboy, I would run up and down the hill on which it stands. Now the cab hiccuped to a stop for three security checks. Even God is not safe here, I thought and went for a *shikara* ride on Dal Lake.

I lay in the *shikara*, watching kids rowing boats. A few tourists on a houseboat were having pictures taken in traditional Kashmiri dress.

Back at the college, my friends, more long lost brothers, waited for me for that special cup of camaraderie--drizzled with a hope that youth inspires, warm with the belief that the world can be changed.

A couple of friends came with me to my house in Lal Nagar. We went down the lane once lined with Kashmiri Pandit homes. The nameplates had changed; houses not sold off looked shrunk and dirty, like badly washed clothes.

Three new houses and encroachments encircled 'my' house. Our plot had been divided into two and a new house stood over 'my' badminton court. We knocked for long before a nervous lady opened the door. Soon, I was sitting in what was my study, the tea suddenly salty with my tears. "Don't lose heart." the new lady of my house said. "We are like your parents, too. Come and stay with us in the summer".

I went to see my Muslim neighbours--once the only Muslim family in our lane. The son, Maqbool, hugged me. His mother was soon wiping my face with her *chadar*, recalling how my sister used to give her medicines when she was ill. She loaded me with walnuts and almonds for my parents, asking me to bring them back for the summer now that things were "normal". Her eyes were dark wells, sad like the ruined temple on the river bank across the colony.

The day kept rewinding in my head like a nonstop reel. That night I could not sleep. We had saved our lives, but lost everything else.

## Day 3-Temples as fortresses

A big blast split the morning, followed by rounds of firing. My friend said everything would be fine in 15 minutes. If that's all the time it took between war and peace!

The famous Kheer Bhawani temple is a pilgrimage for Kashmiri Pandits, definitely worthy of the full CRPF battalion I found guarding it. Swami Vivekananda had stayed here once. A Muslim was selling *puja samagri* because all the Hindu shopkeepers had left. The CRPF *pujari* performed the *puja*. Over a cup of tea, served free by the jawans, I listened to talk of protecting Kashmir and safeguarding the nation. On the way back, people stared at me--an unusual sight--red *tilak* on my forehead, in *kurta* and *pajami*.

There was another house in my mind's album--my grandfather's house in Habbakdal, once a Pandit area with busy, narrow lanes. The lanes looked deserted now, crisscrossing around the once-popular Ganesh temple, looking like a fortress controlled by the army. My ancestral house was a pile of debris. The army had done it, people said. Shops of Kashmiri Pandits were shut.

## Day 4-Bitter truths.

I went to the Jama Masjid; it was Friday. The shops were slowly opening, defying a *bandh* called by a militant group. I was told these days shops closed only if the Hurriyat called a *bandh*.

We got talking to two kids in school uniform. One of them smilingly wished demonstrators would start pelting the army with stones--"what fun!" For kids born in the last ten years, the game of Cops and Robbers has been replaced by a gorier one- 'Encounter'. I don't need to describe it.

It was time to leave. My friends said they abhorred the existing situation, but they were not to blame. They were fed up; they, too, wanted a solution.

"Will I find work here if I come back? Will I be safe?" I asked. They had no answers, except that things would change. They wished I would return, and they sent me away loaded with gifts. Like a bride.

I was alone. I wanted to be. "Will I ever be able to return?" This time I asked myself. This is the answer I got: When you pour liquid in a cup, it adjusts its shape to fit the cup perfectly. What might have been the contents last night or last week is not relevant today. When my community lived in the Valley, we were part of the liquid in the cup. Now, we have lost our relevance. Others have taken our place. Today, there's no trace of us there.

*Source: Hindustan Times*

## 14 Social and Political World-View of Saadat Hasan Manto

By R.K. Shivpuri

SAADAT Hasan Manto, a literary genius, is known to the people of the subcontinent as a master storyteller. He wrote in Urdu, strangely the language in which he failed twice in his school-leaving examination. Manto was to emerge as a great stylist in the same language later.

Manto was a Kashmiri. His fore-fathers had migrated from Kashmir, like many others, during the great famines. He was born in Sambrala, Ludhiana in 1912. Excessive drinking cut his life short at the comparatively young age of 43. In a literary career spanning just two decades, he penned down more than two hundred short stories and wrote scores of plays and essays. His facetious letters to 'uncle Sam' and Pandit Nehru show his tremendous awareness of the political events around and also reflect on his capacity to forge a link between politics and literature.

Saadat Hasan's fame was genuine. He displayed extraordinary brilliance in communicating his concerns. Among his contemporaries, he was the only writer who turned the bloody events of the partition into great literature. But what actually made him famous was the controversial nature of his writing and his courage to present his milieu in ways which were radically different. The Indian middle class, mired in hypocrisy, was shocked out of its wits. Manto was an iconoclast, who defied social tradition. He was denounced for his partition stories and accused of cynicism and sensationalising a tragedy. One critic even said, 'Manto had desecrated the dead and robbed them of their personal possessions'.

Talking about Manto, writer Anita Desai says, "he saw the relation between sex, religion and violence and was obsessed by it as well as sickened...(and) it was when his inflamed passions and emotions became tempered with a satirist's laughter and with a touch of fantasy that he reached his greatest heights".

Manto's brilliance has drawn widespread approval. Salman Rushdie describes him as 'the undisputed master of the Indian short story'. Gopi Chand Narang remarks that Manto was a master craftsman and short-story writer par excellence, who blazed a trail of glory in Urdu fiction unmatched by any other writer. Bhisham Sahani explains, "It is Manto's unique quality as a writer that he juxtaposes the world of reality with the world of make-believe. That is his special gift. It lends rare artistry to his writing and adds immeasurably to the pathos of his stories".

### Opposition:

In his life-time, Manto was reviled and subjected to much abuse and humiliation. The 'progressives' and the traditionalists denounced him in equal measure. Ali Sardar Jafari praised, among others, the story "Bu" in an article published in *Qaumi Jang* (Bombay) in February 1945. The same Jafari attacked the same story for its 'reactionary' contents, a few weeks later. Manto was unceremoniously expelled from the fraternity of newly emerging progressive Urdu writers. The charges levelled were that he was a reactionary and even degenerate in his thinking.

The great writer was also hauled up 'before the courts on the heinous charge of peddling pornography, not once but several times. The day he died, Manto had a summon pending in the court. A judge once, while announcing the judgement, told Manto : "If I had rejected your appeal, you would have gone around saying that you had been done in by a bearded Moulvi'. In another case he told the judge : "A writer picks up his pen only when his sensibility is hurt'.

Manto defended himself and asked his detractors :

"If you cannot tolerate my stories, this means the times are intolerable. There is nothing wrong in my stories. The wrong which is ascribed to my stories, is in fact the rot of the system...If you are opposed to my literature, then the best way is that you change the conditions that motivate such literature...May be my writings are unpleasantly harsh. But what have humans gained from sweet homilies? The neem leaves are pungent but they cleanse the blood."

It is only of late that there has been revival of interest in Manto's writings, but at the official level he continues to be a person non grata. 'Another Lonely voice: The Life and Works of Saadat Hasan Manto',

(1985), by Leslie Flemming was the first serious attempt to put this widely-read writer in correct perspective. Since then a number of anthologies and translations of Manto's work have appeared. These include Khalid Hassan's Kingdom's End and other stories (1987), Partition: Sketches and stories (1991), versions of truth (1991); *Manto Ki Sarva Shreshth* (1991) by Satish Jamali; *Dastavez*, Vol. No: 4 (1993) by Balraj Mehta and Sharad Dutt and Devinder Issar's *Manto Adalat Ke Kathghare Men* (1991). In 1981 Issar had published Mantonama. The prestigious Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Shimla held a seminar on Manto in 1996. This was the first of its kind in India or Pakistan.

In the present paper an attempt is being made to understand the social and political world-view of Saadat Hasan Manto. He defined literature as the pulse of the nation but advised writers to keep sentiment away from it.

### **Social World-View :**

Manto believed all civil societies were designed to legitimise our worst impulses and rejected man as a creature who had any ethical senses. He recorded with 'empathy the lives of the marginalised and the brutalised and attacked with sardonic humour the carelessness of the privileged'. His heroes were people who lived on the fringes of society. To him prostitutes were more interesting than housewives and crooks more human than civil servants. In '*Khol Do*', Manto captures and reveals the damaged psychology of the woman--victim, who has surrendered her sense of being and has become a mechanised sexual object involved in involuntary action.

Krishan Chander once described him as 'the Lord Shankar of Urdu literature', who had drunk to the dregs, the poison of life and then had gone on to describe in great details its taste and colour. Manto's choice of prostitutes and pimps and other marginalised people as subjects was not accidental. Harish Narang observes, "It was an essential part of his ideology-an ideology which foregrounded the lives of the marginalised and the subaltern with the clear objective of not only changing the course of the majority discourse but to subvert it...Slapping his readers into a new social awareness for subverting the status-quo and bringing about fundamental changes into the societal set-up". Devender Issar also defends Manto : "While Manto never pretends to be a philosopher, he is concerned with questions of existence and the self, sin and evil, nature and culture. His preoccupations are always, with the social and cultural man and not with man's essential culture. He, thus simply accepts sex as one of the basic and instinctual aspects of human existence". Manto often said that his stories are for healthy people, for normal people...for those who don't view man-woman relationship with amazement.

Manto was criticised by his contemporary writers for being obsessed with sex and peddling pornography. He accepted the charge but asks : "If any mention of a prostitute is obscene then her existence too is obscene. If any mention of her is prohibited, do away with the prostitute, reference to her would vanish by itself...The house of a prostitute is in itself a dead body which society carries on its shoulders. Until it is buried somewhere by society, there will be discussions about it.

To Saadat Hasan the polite, decent women and their niceties were of no consequence. Her heroines were 'a whore who remains awake at night, and while asleep during the day, suddenly wakes up after seeing a terrible dream of old age knocking at her door' or a woman who after quarrelling with her husband and threatening to commit suicide, goes to see a movie and her husband is terribly worried".

### **Urge for recognition:**

Manto has been described as a man difficult to understand, quarrelsome by nature, touchy, introverted and egotistical. This often made him lonely. He frequently complained of being depressed. Whether his portrayal of terror, pain, misery, brutal sexuality had any link with his depressive state of mind, has yet to be explored.

Some say that his desire for reassurance and approval were the real causes for his depression. His dilemma to opt for Pakistan was resolved when his film-scripts were put aside for those of Nazir Ajmeri, Kamal Amrohi and Shahid Latif. Once, while defending his writing, Manto said "After Iqbal..it is as if Providence has put locks on all doors of literature and handed over the keys to just one blessed soul". The epithet he chose himself a year before his death also shows his concern for self-recognition.



It read :

*Here lies Saadat Hasan Manto. With him lie  
buried all the arts and mysteries of short-story  
Writing. Under tons of earth he lies, wondering if  
he is a greater short story writer than god.*

### **Ideology :**

Manto abhorred all ideologies, religious or political. His "Student Union Camp", "Sharabi", "Do or Die--*Mein Langot Ka Pakka Rahoonga*", "contemptuous references to dervishes and leftists (whisky to *Aise Gale Se Utar Kar Pet Me Inquilab Zindabad Likhti Gay*) 'assiduously created an absolute disbelief in any ideology of power of salvation'.

The great writer often crossed swords with high priests of progressive Urdu literature. In *Jaib-e-Kafan*, he writes : 'I felt sorry for the activists of the progressive movement who unnecessarily meddled in politics. These charlatans were using the prescription proposed by Kremlin and were busy preparing a mixture of literature and politics. Nobody bothered about the temperament or the pulse of the patient for whom the mixture was prepared. The result for everyone to see. We are brooding over the stagnation in our litterature'.

In *Gunah Ki Baityan, Gunah Ke Bap*, he again takes up the communists : 'I greatly detested the so-called communists. I could not appreciate people who talked about the 'sickle and the hammer' while sitting in comfortable arm-chairs. In this connection, comrade Sajjad Zaheer who sipped his milk in a silver cup, always remained a clown in my eyes. The true psychology of working labourers is manifested in their sweet. May be, the people who used this sweat to earn wealth, and used it as ink to write detailed manifestoes, are sincere people. However, you will pardon me, if I consider them to be impostors"'.

Faiz Ahmed Faiz, once while absolving his 'Thanda Ghosht' of the charge of obscenity, said the story did not fulfill "those higher objectives of literature because in this (story) there is no satisfactory solution to the basic problems of life." Bhisham Sahani says, "If the progressives found fault with Manto, it was on this score. During the forties, when the progressive movement in literature had over-zealous adherents, the main emphasis on literature was not on character realisation but on protest...The progressives therefore expected that a sensitive artist like Manto, who was writing about the lives of the prostitutes, would also show the nature of exploitation to which the prostitute was being subjected. It would not have been idealistic or romantic on the part of Manto to show a character in the throes of a struggle to free herself from the shackles of this slavery...they were also critical of his total lack of interest in the cruel subjection of the poor to exploitation."

Manto rebutted the charge. He said, "I do not consider myself to be either a preacher or a teacher of morals...We diagnose diseases but don't run a clinic'. Elsewhere he remarks : 'I don't whip up the emotions and ideas of people. How can I undress culture and civilisation when they already have no clothes on. I also don't try to dress them up since it is not my job but that of drapers'.

On partition, Manto took no sides and wrote with detachment and passion about the brutalities committed by Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs in the name of religion and nationalism. He also did not make any attempt to establish parity between the monstrosities committed by all. 'Mozel' is his only story that describes the cultural visibility of his characters, otherwise he steers clear of all stereotypes.

### **Political Views :**

Manto lived in momentous times and was aware of the great changes taking place. He was very alive and sensitive to political currents. KN Daruwala observes, "unless they referred to either the freedom struggle on the subcontinent, or the stupidity of the partition, they never made an appearance in his fiction".

He was a humanist but at the same time a free-thinker. Manto would have never reacted to the partition the way he did had he not been aware of the contradictions and other complications of the Muslim mind in the sub-continent. In "*Aakhri Salute*", Manto asks : "Was the Pakistani Army fighting for Kashmir or

Kashmiri Muslims? In case they were prodded to fight for Muslims in Kashmir, why were they not sent to Hyderabad and Junagarh to fight for the Muslims there? In case it was a purely Islamic war, why were not other Muslim countries joining the war".

For Manto, partition was an overwhelming tragedy. If his first set of partition stories are derisive tales of a degenerate society, his second set (1951-55) of stories are both 'parables of lost reason and demonic parodies of the conventional history of the national movement'. To Manto, 1947 is not a celebrative, an epiphanic event. Partition was 'not an unfortunate rupture in historical time but a continuation of it'.

In his famous story '*Toba Tek Singh*', the mad person is none other than Manto. The lunatic asylum around which the entire story revolves, alludes to the abode of millions of sensible and dignified people, who were unable to understand the basic logic of the partition. In the same story he asks, 'Moulvi Saab, what is this Pakistan' After deep contemplation, he replied, "It is a place in India where blades are manufactured". In the '*Dog of Tetwal*', Manto 'mocks at the foolish gullibility and mindlessness of people vis-a-vis discourses of power and authority'. There is constant tension: would those who killed the dog die as patriots or would they die the death of cruel fools for their country, religion or cause.

Manto was completely confounded, not as much by the geographical divide as by the cultural chasm created by it. This is reflected in his '*Zahmate-Mihre-Darakhshan*'. He ironically asks : Will Pakistani literature be different, and if so, how? Will literature be partitioned also? What I could never resolve was the question : What country did we now belong to, India or Pakistan..."

#### **Pakistan :**

Saadat Hasan could not reconcile with the reality of Pakistan. In '*Khol Do*' he depicts how the Pakistani society, from the moment of its inception, had turned brutal despite the theological ideals held forth in its defense. '*Zaroorat Hai*' shows Manto's feelings on discrimination of being an outsider. He summed up his predicament : "You know me as a short story writer and the courts know me an obscene writer. The government sometimes calls me a communist, and sometimes a great literary figure of the country. Sometimes the doors of livelihood are closed on me and sometimes they are opened for me. Sometimes I am declared a persona non grata and considered an outsider, sometimes, when the powers-that-be are pleased, I am told that I can be an 'insider'. I am still troubled, as I have often been in the past, over the questions like : Who am I? What is my status? What is my role in this country which is regarded as the largest Islamic state?"

The Indian national movement too found an echo in his stories--'It happened in 1919 (second story on Jallianwala Bagh massacre), '*Naya Kanoon*' and '*Swaraj Ke Liye*'.

#### **'Uncle Same':**

In his last years, Manto increasingly becomes political. He wrote a series of facetious letters (nine) to uncle Sam when US was about to sign a military agreement with Pakistan. Manto was not satisfied with American influences on the society and polity of Pakistan. He strikes a note of satire : "...our mullah is the best counter to Russian communism...I think the only purpose of military aid is to arm these mullahs'. He thanks the mullahs who kept the alcohol available, despite prohibition, due to their weakness for it. In his own ways Manto evolves a critique of US imperialism. He argues that Americans intended to dump all the discarded arms and ammunitions from second world war on the two countries. Manto says he had also heard that the US had made a hydrogen bomb so that there could be lasting peace in the world. Yet he wondered, "how many countries will need to be removed from the face of the earth for this lasting peace to be established". His niece had asked him to draw a map of the world for her. He had told her that he would draw the map after consulting with his uncle to "find out the names of the countries that were going to survive" (fifth letter).

Manto also drew himself into the vortex of Indo-Pak conflict and at times behaved as a Pak chauvinist. In August 1954 he wrote another facetious letter Dibaba, this time to Nehru, which turned into the preface of a book of short stories called Beghair Unwaan Ke (Untitled). Manto was deeply disturbed over the piracy of his works in India and that Nehru, fellow Kashmiri was doing nothing to stop it. Manto writes : "...you can find right away how many publishers in Delhi, Lucknow, and Jalandhar have pirated my

books. Several lawsuits have already been filled against me on charges of obscenity. But look at the injustice of things, that in Delhi, right under your nose, a publisher brings out the collection of my stories and calls it The obscene stories of Manto. I wrote the book *Ganje Farishte*. An Indian publisher has published it as *Behind the curtains....* Now tell me, what should I do?"

Manto's second grievance was India had stopped the *river waters*. Using metaphors of '*nahr*' and '*mund*', he complains : "I was surprised to learn that you want to stop the rivers from flowing through our land. Panditji, you are only a Nehru. I regret that I am just a measuring stone weighing one and a half seer. If I were a rock of thirty or forty thousand maunds, I would have thrown myself into the river, so that you would have to spend some time consulting with your engineers on how to pull out". Manto also depicted this in '*Yazid*'.

On Radcliffe award, he complains: 'The country was partitioned. Radcliffe employed Patel to do the dirty work. You have illegally occupied Junagarh, which a Kashmiri could do only under the influence of a Maratha. I mean Patel (God forgive him)...It was the time when Radcliffe had turned India into two slices of a single loaf of bread. It is regrettable that they have not been toasted yet. You are toasting it from that side and we, from this. But the flames in our braziers are coming from outside'.

### **Kashmir:**

Many of Manto's Indian readers may be shocked by his chauvinistic stand on Kashmir. Manto expresses his disappointment over the fact that Kashmir was a part of India. He says : "...I have only been up to Banihal. I have seen places like Kud, Bataut and Kashtwar. I have seen their poverty alongwith their beauty. If you have removed this poverty, then keep Kashmir to yourself. But I am sure you cannot do it, despite being a Kashmiri because you have no time." One may well ask whether Pakistan had banished poverty.

Manto also refers to corruption under Bakshi: "The Bakshis and the rest of them deserve to be sacked right away. Cheats of the first order ! You have no reason to bestow such honours on them." Is this because it suits you? But why at all...? I know you are a politician, which I am not. But that does not mean I do not understand anything...Panditji, this is the season of baggugoshas. What injustice that you have given Bakshi all the rights over them, and he does not send me even a few as a gift! Well, let the gift go to hell, baggugoshas too...No, on second thoughts, let them be".

Manto is also overwhelmed by his nostalgia for Kashmir, the land of his forefathers. He recalls how in the past the older people from his side often met those from the side of Kashmiri Pandits. Now 'one Kashmiri does run into another in by-lanes, or at cross roads'. Manto also pronounces judgements on Kashmiris : 'To be a Kashmiri is to be handsome...Kashmiris have never accepted defeat in any field...Who can outshine us in poetry?'. He also refers to how Kashmiri surnames, whether Nehru or Manto are only nicknames. Manto recalls with nostalgia, "Whenever my late father--who was obviously, a Kashmiri--ran into a hatu, he would bring him home, seat him in the lobby, and treat him to some Kashmiri salty tea and Kulchas. Then he would tell him proudly, "I'm also a Koshar". Panditji, you are a Koshar too". Manto also feels for the Kashmiri cuisine : 'Between us Pandit brothers, do this--call me back to India. First I will help myself to *shaljam shabdegh* (turnip and meat preparation cooked overnight in a wok) at your place, and then take over the responsibility for Kashmir affairs...Every morning you will have to treat me to salty tea along with a Kulcha. *Shaljam Shabdegh*, in any case, will have to be there every week". In this letter, Manto also refers to an anecdote pertaining to the poet, Ghani Kashmiri, where one line of the couplet reads : "The smell of Kebab is wafting from your clothes". Elsewhere he says : "...We can think of new ways of cooking *roganjosh*, *pulao* and *korma*".

Kashmir overweighs on Manto's mind. In 'A Question of Honour', he says he comes from Amritsar and was a Kashmiri. '*The Dog of Tetwal*' and '*Aakhri Salute*' stories are set in the beautiful Kishanganga Valley. His two prostitute characters, Zeenat in 'Babu Gopi Nath' and Shanti in the story '*Shanti*' are Kashmiris. When he first sees Zeenat at Babu Gopi Nath's place, he describes her as follows : "Her face was round and her complexion was fair. On entering the room, I at once realised that she was the Kashmiri Kabutari whom Sando had mentioned in the office".

## 15 'Zah Rang' released

*Soom Nath Sadhu's dream comes true*

### KS Correspondent

At long last late Soom Nath Sadhu's dream has come true. The anthology of his plays '*Zah rang*', the title he himself had chosen, has seen the light of the day. Recently, the book written in nastaliq Kashmiri, was officially released at a simple function, organised by FUNKAR organisation. The book was conceived by the late artist in 1981. He had even paid advance money to Mohd. Yosuf Miskeen of Radio Kashmir, for its publication. Pt. Soom Nath died on October 5, 1982 but Mr. Miskeen did not pursue the task assigned to him. His wife, Mohini Channa and son, Rajiv Sadhu, despite all odds, did not lose heart. Mrs. Mohini, however, gives all the credit to Rajiv, saying, "This is all due to the tireless efforts of my son". The anthology, includes such well-received plays : *Chapath* (slap), *Yih Zahar Kus Cheyah* (who will swallow this poison), *Janki*, *Zah Rang* (two colours), *Riyazun Mol* (Riyaz's father), *Grand Rehearsal*, (grand preparation), *Rehearsal*, *Bah Chus Choor* (I am a thief) etc. There are a total of eleven plays.

Late Soom Nath Sadhu had a proud lineage. His father, Prem Nath Padesi, an all-time great artist of the state had earned death warrant from Pakistanis, for using radio as an effective medium to counter their poisonous propogand, during the tribal-raid. It was Pardesi, who had scripted the slogan "*Hamlavar Khabardar, Hum Kashmiri Hai Tayar*". This became the slogan of resistance, put up by Kashmiris, to defend Srinagar city against Pak invaders. Sadhus belonged to Malik Aangan, Fateh Kadal in the down-town Srinagar.

Som Nath Sadhu was the eldest among the five children. He was pursuing his Masters in Science at Agra, when he received the news of his father's death. Soom Nath left the studies half way to look after his family. He joined Radio Kashmir as a copyist in 1955, on compassionate grounds. He had to support a big family and look after his three sisters and a brother. He was already engaged to Mohini Channa when his father died.

It was the famous feature programme '*Zoona Dub*' which brought Soom Nath Sadhu into limelight. It also drew the best out of him. '*Zoona Dub*' feature programme was started in 1966 as the state administration was quite keen to know about the public grievances and redress these promptly. Late SN Sadhu put his heart into the programme and worked very hard. He was its Central character, 'Aga Saab'. His wife Mohini recalls, "I must confess I failed to understand him. He was a unique person, a superman. He worked tirelessly for making '*Zoona-Dub*' a very successful programme, which would strongly reflect day to day problems of the people. My husband would work till late hours of mid-night, for conceptualizing the following morning's *Zoona Dub*. If Idd was announced suddenly he had to change the programme already recorded and there would be live recording. It would take him just fifteen minutes to think about the change.

Soom Nath Sadhu knew well if '*Zoona-Dub*' was to be a people's programme, then he had to be among the people to know how do they think. He would go and stand near the pavements of shops. Soom Nath would visit ration ghats to record the impressions of the people about rations supplied to them and also the feelings of boat-women. In Pandit marriages, he would never miss Mehandiraat. He would sit among ladies to record their feelings.

Though '*Watalbuj*', a predecessor of *Zoona-Dub* was also his production but it was the latter through which late Soom Nath Sadhu is known. He was awarded '*Padam Shri*' for this programme in 1974. Started in 1966, the serial '*Zoona-Dub*' went on uninterrupted till his death in 1982. It continued for a few more years after his death. But '*Zoona-Dub*' after his death looked like a caricature of the old programme.

Soom Nath Sadhu was a wonderful husband too. His wife recalls, "Once I felt the close working of my husband with Mariam begum, Aga Bai would affect my married life. I conveyed this to him. He laughed and said, "I have transcended these relations. It is just only for programme that we are Aga Saab and Agabai". To allay my apprehensions, he took me to "Radio Kashmir" to show how the programme was being recorded. I was still not satisfied. He took me again a couple of times till I was convinced".

How others particularly the artists who worked with him in 'Zoona-Dub' thought about him? Rajiv once asked Mariam Begum what she thought about his father. She replied, "*Nah Voth Tiyuth Kahn, Nah Vathih Tiyuth Kahn*" (There has been no parallel to him uptill now, nor there will be any in future). Nazir Sahib, his son in 'Zoona-Dub' had gone to see him at AIIMS, New Delhi. Nazir said to him, "*Sadhu Sahib, toih chuv kahfi kamzor gamaet* (Sadhu Sahib, you have grown very weak"). The great artist with his superb wit replied.

"*Dazanas lagih kamiya kaal*" (It would take less time for cremation). Soom Nath Sadhu was just 47 years of age when he died.

Soom Nath was a man of great talent. He tried his hand in *Afsana* writing and films too. His *Afsana "Yeli meh tie laej"* (When I wore a tie) was well-received. He acted in Kashmiri films "*Mehandiraat*" (Manz-iraat), "*Mehjoor*", and "*Doctor Zero*", produced by Doordarshan Srinagar in mid-1970's. He toured many countries and had a stint in CEDO Institute, London in play-writing and production. In 1971 he was awarded 'Sadiq Memorial Trophy' by J&K Government.

SN Sadhu was extremely fond of "*Chakri*". His role in Ladakh as Director Radio Kashmir, Leh, was that of a pioneer in Ladakhi cultural renaissance. Before he took over Leh station would just relay Hindi film songs. There were no indigenous programmes. Soom Nath Sadhu worked hard to search for local talent. He translated many programme on different themes, including information on agriculture, in the Ladakhi language, to make the local radio meaningful for the people. It was a revolutionary step. At the time of his death, he was serving as Director AIR External Services.



## ***16 Central Asia in decades to come: Impact on Kashmir***

**By K.N. Pandita**

The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 threw up the vast region of Central Asia as a new and significant geopolitical entity bound to influence the course of Asian history. Under the Soviet power, it had remained something like a forbidden land about which there were only surmises and speculations. An air of mystique surrounded the very name of Central Asia and our mind remained riveted to the legends of Great Steppes, warring nomadic people, the oases of historic antiquity, the celebrated horse riders and their shifting camps etc.

### **Illusion and reality:**

Turkey, Iran, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan, all predominantly Muslim countries were the first to focus their attention on independent countries of Central Asia in 1991. Each came with a specific card to play. Turkey contemplated playing the Pan-Turkie card meaning the Turkish ethnicity and language.

Saudi Arabia and Pakistan entered Central Asia in a big way carrying the Islamic ard. The Saudis opened their coffers and poured money for building mosques and in providing millions of of excellently printed copies of Quran for distribution to each and every family in Central Asia. But their message was that of Wahhabi Sunni Islam. Likewise, Pakistan besides supporting the Wahhabism, also went on sniffing fissionable material in nuclear plants in Central Asia built by the Soviets like the one in Khujand in Tajikistan.

Iran tried to confine herself mostly to Tajikistan, where from times immemorial, the people of Aryan stock had been at loggerheads with those of the Turkic stock. Furthermore, the linguistic affinity between Farsi and Tajiki was another positive attraction for them. Therefore moving more subtly, they used the cultural commonality as the safe and dependable means of making inroads into Tajik society.

In strategic terms, American presence will continue in Central Asia for a long time to come for many reasons. In the first place nobody can predict what way the Islamic fundamentalism will behave. As long as Al-Qaeda brand diehards are there, the show of muscle power has to be the part of strategy. Since the Chinese are faced with the problem in Xinjiang and the Russians in the southern Muslim states, both the countries will have to re-adjust their regional strategies in order to accommodate moderate American military presence in Central Asia.

America's military presence will help modernize defence system of the CARs. The Americans are already imparting new techniques of military training to Uzbek army units and this will spread to other republics also. Moreover new generation weapons and armament will also flow to Central Asia because the markets will be thrown open on western manufacturers of the latest weaponry. This will help create a sense of stability and self-sufficiency among the CARs.

In regard to religion, it has to be noted that Islam is the predominant religion in these republics. But the truth is that left to themselves, the Central Asians would be a model of moderate and progressive Islam outward looking and desiring practically to coexist peacefully with other faiths. If the damaging influence of neighbouring fanatical Islamic states is contained and disallowed to penetrate into Central Asian societies, then, of course,

## 17 Creative role for Kashmiri Associations

### Prof. T.N. Madan

Being 'modern' or becoming 'modern' has been known to be the ambition of every society or community in the last two centuries or so. In effect, this has meant being like Western Society—borrowing its institutions, imitating its life-style, acknowledging the superiority of its value orientations, and making use of its science and technology.

Whether we like it or not 'modernisation' has been attributed to the obstructive role of its own culture. The loss of political independence and economic exploitation, which were the most visible parts of Western colonialism, did not, perhaps, corrode the human spirit and creativity as much as had been effected by the erosion of cultural traditions round the world—languages, arts, festivals, crafts all suffered grievous damage. In many parts of the world the subordinated countries and communities came to look upon their own cultural traditions with a sense of shame if not also of guilt. Thus when Western scholars said that Indian art and architecture were monstrous, many educated Indians concurred.

The death knell of Western colonialism in the 1940s and 1950s, ending political dependence and seeking economic reconstruction was not immediately accompanied by the recovery of cultural pride. The 'old' societies were judged to be in need of drastic sociocultural change to transform them into 'new' states. Asian, African and Latin American cultural traditions were generally dubbed as 'premodern' and efforts were set afoot to modernize them. In other words, the ending of political and economic dependence hastened rather than terminated cultural imperialism. The newly independent nations went in for massive educational and cultural innovation programmes which aimed at world-wide diffusion of a universal modern culture within the boundaries of nation-states.

Within these states, subnational cultural traditions came to be looked upon with suspicion as internal threats to the newly won independence. One recalls in this context the resistance to the linguistic reorganisation of states in India. Complaints began to be voiced that 'Indians' were the most pitiable minority in India pitted against the proponents of regional cultures, whether the Assamese or the Bengalis or the Punjabis or whosoever.

Gradually, however, the value and power of cultural traditions has begun to be recognised. The emergence of Bangladesh was a major success for those seeking the legitimacy of diverse cultural traditions and protesting against political domination and cultural monism. This process was hastened by the worsening of the internal crisis in the Western civilization, characterized by a runaway consumerism, a mindless materialism and the pervasion of science and technology.

In such a context, the efforts of a community like the Kashmiri Pandits to try to preserve their cultural traditions in and outside the Valley must be seen as a healthy trend about which no one need be apologetic. But the many Kashmiri Associations that have sprung up all over the country and abroad must realize that the task they face is difficult because the preservation of a culture away from its historical habitat is not easy. It is also difficult for it could isolate the Kashmiris from their new cultural settings. Thus a community of Kashmiris in Calcutta which fails to establish a creative dialogue with Bengali culture would in the end only impoverish itself.

Not everything in a cultural tradition is worth preserving, least of all exclusivism and hubris. We must, therefore, seek to not only preserve Kashmiri culture but also learn to be innovative and also to live in creative cultural intercourse with other communities. The Kashmiri community must also learn to recognise the richness of its own *internal* cultural variety and also the limitations of this cultural heritage. Confidence and humility do indeed go well together and are much needed to achieve the constructive tasks ahead of us.

*\*The author is a renounced Sociologist of international repute.*

## 18 Translation of Marriage-Contract Deed of Kashmiri Pandits

*(Specimen of Shahjahan's time)*

In the victorious reign of the most devout worshipper of the Primeval Divinity, the most respected, supreme ruler, overlord of kins, illustrious among emperors, protector of his subjects, the glorious Shahjahan—in the year so and so, in the month so and so, on the date so and so, on the day so and so, this marriage-deed is executed in village Gunda district Mannaka (?) between so and so Bhatta, son of so and so Bhatta (on the one side) Bhatta, son of so and so and so Pandit of village Chandraka, district Nagrama (on the other), under these provisions : (1) that my daughter, who is a virgin named so and so, is given in marriage by the religious law pertaining to the Brahmans, in the presence of the gods Soma, Surya and Agni as witnesses, to your son named Pandit so and so; (2) that the bride's side will provide (a) one thousand dishes (of cooked rice and meat) to the guests as promised by the cook, (b) one full-dress of cotton cloth for the bridegroom, (c) one garment for the bridegroom's father, (d) one single-bhari turban for 'Potmaharja', (e) one umbrella, one garment for the foster-father, and (f) one cow, two heifers, one bronze dish, one vessel, one wooden sandal with straps (*pushtakhas*), ten thousand *dinaras*, one walnut tree and two *prasthas* of land. This is to be given by me (the father of the bride) as dowry and is accepted by you, the father of the bridegroom. From the bridegroom's side will be given (to the bride) twenty thousand *dinaras* according to the Kashmiri system, one *shriangaka*, one woollen-garment (*phiran*), one *shri-davanika*, one padukavartika, one silver ring, one blanket (or shawl) and one toilet box. All this is to be given by you (the bridegroom's party) as is usual with the Kashmiris and I accept it. Witness Almighty.

*(For original text in Sanskrit see Lokaprakasa, Book II, and Indische Studien, XVIII, p.378)*

## ***19 Changing US Perceptions and South Asia***

**By P.K. Kothari**

September 11 Al Qaeda terrorist attacks on Washington and New York constitute a moment of radical transformation in world politics. It brought landmark changes in American perceptions on international terrorism. Strikes shattered two myths. One, that the US enjoyed a unique geostrategic advantage. If in the past the threats to US were derived, now these are direct. America today finds the phenomenon of terrorism as much a threat to international peace as to the homeland security. Secondly, the option of using 'militant' Islam to push forward geo-strategic objectives stands exhausted. A country that reared Wahabist regimes until recently mortally dreads Wahabism and its different variants.

The US is accosted with an elusive enemy, who does not abide by the traditional rules of war and can wreak destruction on urban America through acts of terrorism. Internal security has become a major domestic concern in America, as never before. New ideas on 'pre-emptive' or 'preventive wars' with concepts of 'regime change' are being floated. The US Defence Secretary, Donald Rumsfeld put it as "If this war requires active abetment of regime change in nations that support terrorism and occupation of territory, so be it".

There has also been concern on the dangers from the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, in particular to terrorist groups, like Al-Qaeda, as well as the rogue states. Michael Krepon, Head of Henry Stimson Centre warns : 'One cannot confidently dismiss the possibility that a terrorist group in South Asia will acquire the means to make a crude nuclear weapon'. Besides, legal and political measures to prevent the spread of weapons of mass destruction, the US is stressing on the military capability to deal with the threat. 'Counter-proliferation' and the development of missile defences are being talked about. The emphasis has shifted from rogue states to rogue groups. Previously, the US would not censure groups, which did not threaten US citizens and its assets. The US is abandoning this narrow approach awards a problem, which has global implications.

The US has enduring interests with history of intense political and economic engagement in Islamic world. It does not consider the ongoing confrontation with "Jehadi" groups as the clash of the world civilisations. It is the latter who regard it so. The US aim in the ongoing anti-terrorism campaign, is to defeat variants of Islamist extremism in Middle East and South Asia. The other hidden agenda in this campaign is to re-establish its total hegemony as the world's sole superpower. It has clearly designed its strategic designs in South and Central Asia. In the Middle East it is re-orienting its policy, jettisoning old friends and fine-tuning new strategies.

### **Middle East:**

The US focus is towards Iraq rather than terrorism emanating from Palestinian-Israel conflict. It is seeking the ouster of radical regimes of the kind in Iraq. Incidentally, the second largest oil and gas reserves are in Iraq and hence US's obsession with replacing Saddam Hussain with a more pliable leader. The other consideration for war against Iraq is to keep its military-industry complexes thriving. Long-drawn war either in Iraq or Afghanistan suits economic and geo-strategic ambitions of US. The other initiatives in the middle east include support to the forces who seek a change in Iran, and uncritical support to Israel against Palestinians.

Relationship with erstwhile allies like Egypt and Saudi Arabia have undergone a profound change. US has said it has no intention to increasing aid to Egypt. Of the nineteen hijackers involved in attacks on World Trade Centre, fifteen were Saudis. This was forced US to tighten screws on Saudis. The Saudis were subjected to intense pressure to crackdown on several so-called 'charities' that were known to be funding fundamentalist organisations, given to promoting not just Wahabi Islam but terrorist violence all across the world. The Americans are moving towards reducing the importance of Saudi Arabia on energy supplies, by turning to sources like Russia. US also put pressure on Canada to end its visa-free entry to Saudi citizens. Mexico was asked to close down Riyadh embassy. Of the one trillion dollars investment in US, Saudis have reportedly withdrawn \$200 billion dollars in past one year. Saudis alongwith Pakistanis

are specially sought after immigrants in US, called to register themselves along with finger-prints and photographs. In 1990 Saudis had ardently supported US against Iraq. Today, they view the prospects of American military action against Iraq with some trepidation. Americans have also suggested to Saudis to encourage more openness and reform. In a recent address to the council on Foreign Relations, Mr Richard Hass, US Asstt. Secretary of state asserted that it was the lack of popular support and legitimacy that limited the ability of many regimes in the Islamic world to provide assistance to American efforts to combat terrorism and address issues of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

### **South Asia :**

Post-September 11, 2001 has seen an unprecedented American engagement in South Asia. The war against Al-Qaeda and Taliban has already enmeshed US to rebuilding state and nation in Afghanistan. It has also brought war into a renewed military presence as well as deep political involvement in Pakistan.

Pakistan has been designated as an ally in the war against terrorism only for reasons of convenience. The US is caught up in a paradoxical situation. It requires the support of Gen. Musharraf and Pak army to achieve its immediate objectives in the war against terrorism. But the very forces it is trying to defeat have been the bastard children of the Army and its Jehadi cohorts. The US cannot realise its goals in the anti-terrorism agenda unless it radically alters Pak state and society. Political expediency and its penchant to put strategic designs above anti-terrorism agenda, rule it but for the moment. Dr Ayesha Siddiqa-Agha, the noted Pakistan columnist describes Pakistan's present relationship with US as one of dependency and subservience on the one hand and deceit and subterfuge on another.

There is widespread acceptance that Pakistan has become the epicenter of terrorism and breeding ground of religious fanatics. Najam Sethi, Editor, the *Friday Times* describes Pakistan : 'The country is home to Al-Qaeda. It has nuclear weapons. It is accused of trying to export nuclear technology. It has come to the brink of war with India. The word abroad is that Pakistan is potentially the most dangerous place in the world'. The Influential "*Newyorker*" magazine reported, quoting a US non-proliferation expert : "Pakistan is the most dangerous country in the world right now and if the USA is incinerated any time it will be because of the highly enriched uranium that was given to Al-Qaeda by Islamabad'.

### **Pakistan Reluctance :**

The US has succeeded in its mission to oust Taliban and Al-Qaeda regime in Afghanistan and installing Hamid Karzai, a friendly government. The lack of co-operation from Pakistan has hamstrung the US campaign. Even after September 11, 01 Pakistan did not abandon the Taliban and Al-Qaeda. Director of ISI bluffed the Americans on the handing over of Osama Bin Laden by Taliban. It was only after Bush threatened to take off Pakistan's nuclear assets that General Musharraf relented. Bush also overruled Pakistan's demands for ceasefire during Ramazan and not to allow Northern Alliance to take over Kabul. Knowing American compulsions, Musharraf sought to use new alliance to obtain international political legitimacy for himself. At the same time, the Pak dictator did not want to end its own terrorist activities in Kashmir on the ground that those who were fighting against Indian security forces in Kashmir were not terrorists but "freedom-fighters". The US summarily rejected this argument. President Bush himself declared that any person who targeted innocent civilians was a terrorist irrespective of the cause he represented.

US, however, agreed to allow over 4,000 Taliban and Al-Qaeda supporters to be airlifted from Kunduz by Pakistan Air Force. Subsequently, the Bush administration kept under wraps the dirty collaboration between North Korea and Pakistan. In the past also, Reagan administration had agreed to overlook Pakistan's nuclear programme and murdering of democracy, in return for support to American Jihad against Soviet Union in Afghanistan.

### **US slows down campaign :**

The Daniel Pearl murder exposed ISI's continuing links with Al-Qaeda and the Taliban. Recently Congressional Research Sources finding reveals that merely 12 of the 31 top Al-Qaeda members and six of the 27 top Taliban members have been killed or captured. The US's antiterrorism campaign has failed



due to lack of cooperation by Pakistan and unwillingness of US to push Pakistan hard for eliciting cooperation.

Pakistan's territory and infrastructure continue to sponsor terrorism in the region. Ahmed Rashid, a noted commentator on the region, blames Pakistan's army establishment for adopting a policy of running with the hare and hunting with the hounds, in the American war on terrorism. While one section of ISI pretends to cooperate with the FBI, another section provides shelter to Taliban and Al-Qaeda leaders. The top Taliban leadership—Mullah Kabir, Jallaluddin Haqqani, Maulana Muhd. Hassan and G. Hekamatyar stay in Pakistan with full knowledge of Pakistan government. A former Taliban diplomat indicated that the Taliban had acquired chemical weapons. He also added that Osama bin Laden was frequently shuttling between Afghanistan and Pakistan. There are an estimated 10,000 Al-Qaeda terrorists who have taken sanctuary in the tribal areas of Waziristan and Northern Areas. The allegations that Musharraf was responsible for helping Jehadi parties to come to power in NWFP and Baluchistan have a ring of truth. The purpose being to provide logistic support to Al-Qaeda and Taliban, even while maintaining plausible deniability for himself.

Why is Pakistan unwilling to support the American's war against terrorism? Ralph Peters, author of 'Beyond Terror: Strategy in a changing world' says it is because the extremists have been fervent allies on Kashmir issue. He argues, "The government has been unwilling to take a stand as the organised domestic extremists, whose avowed goal is to remake Pakistan as a strict Islamic state and who sponsor violence to achieve their ends. All the while the mirage of a "liberated" Kashmir blinds Pakistan's leadership to the country's rational self-interest". Imtiaz Alam, a leading Pakistan columnist points out that the trouble Pakistan is faced with today is basically the wages of its own sins which it committed after adopting a "false doctrine of strategic depth". He argues : "A pro-militancy policy for more than two decades had created a widespread network of Jihadi militias, civilian and military structures, that were attuned to militancy and often adventurism. It was just not enough to change one external aspect of a flawed security doctrine. What was required was that all spectrums of militancy should have been completely dispensed with..."

There are some analysts who point out US has slowed down anti-terrorism campaign due to its strategic designs in Central Asia. Prolonged stay in the region, rather than a quick victory, will help achieve this and the ultimate aim to encircle China.

Contradictions in the uneasy US-Pakistan alliance are reaching to a climax. It seems the unnatural relationship is coming to an end. There are a number of reasons.

On December 29, 2002 there was unprecedented exchange of fire between Pakistani troops and American special forces in Southern Waziristan. Two Pakistani and one American soldier were killed and a religious seminary was bombed. Pakistan has not been cooperating and Al-Qaeda operatives have been freely criss-crossing the porous Pakistan-Afghanistan border and regrouping. Most of the Al Qaeda-Taliban attacks on allied forces are occurring in the areas bordering Pakistan. There has been reluctance on the part of Pakistan to allow coalition forces to conduct combat operations in Pakistan, particularly in tribal areas, bordering Afghanistan. Recently thousands of Pakistani soldiers "deserted" army to join Al-Qaeda terrorists in the tribal areas. As per US officials, there are more than 10,000 Al-Qaeda terrorists, having taken sanctuary in tribal areas of Waziristan and Northern Areas. Fake passports were being issued to Al-Qaeda terrorists. The US has sought permission to bomb the Pak tribal areas. This has unnerved the Pakistanis. The tribal areas of Waziristan Agency have seen been completely sealed.

Secondly the US administration has found the Pakistan authorities wanting on many counts, especially the FBI hunt for Al-Qaeda elements. The authorities have been engaged in cosmetic crackdowns. An influential section in the establishment has also been cleared real culprits. In the Sheraton bombing case, in which 11 French Engineers were killed, Pakistan police fabricated a story to prove the involvement of one Asif Zaheer. FBI officials had shielding him of any involvement in this case. FBI has now taken over the charge of hunt inside Pakistan and has put three million Pakistanis--criminals, politicians, industrialists and businessmen, under scrutiny. Dr Amir Aziz and other people involved in nuclear

programme were apprehended and questioned by FBI in Lahore and Multan. Dr AQ Khan, whose sympathies for Al-Qaeda, is well known, too has been put under scrutiny. Musharraf has been asked to usher reforms in madarassas and have better official monitoring, to desist these from preaching violence. The widespread network of Al-Qaeda in Bangladesh and the presence of Lashkar camps in Kuwait, which point to Pakistan involvement, have also alarmed the US.

There is also a litany of complaints from Pakistanis in the US, livid at the treatment meted to them. Americans rebuffed the suggestion of Pakistan Foreign Minister, Khurshid Kasuri, to take Pakistan off the list of suspect countries. Nearly 50,000 Pakistanis fear deportation. Pakistanis fear their country's turn will come after US has dealt with Iraq. These fears have even been articulated by Gen. Musharraf.

Two major developments which have brought urgency in US response against Pakistan are regrouping of Taliban and stepping up of cross-border terrorism in J&K. In December, 2002 ISI facilitated a meeting between Hekmatyar and Mulla Omar. The two were in full agreement to carry out operations against the American forces. The Americans have voiced their concern on attempts at Talibanisation, beheading of women and pushing of foreigners and Al Qaeda terrorists and suicide squads in J&K. ISI has floated two conglomerates 'Kashmir Freedom Force' and 'Kashmir Revolutionary Force' of Jehadi militias. About five hundred members of Lashkar and Jaish-i-Muhamad have been released. Their chiefs are going round the country whipping up Jihadist hysteria. Lashkar and Jaish have been re-designated as Jamaat-ud-Dawa and Tehrik-i-Khuddam udding respectively. The two organisations have spent Rs 500 million in buying property to set up new centres in four provinces. The print media of these Jehadi organisations, which had become dormant too, has become active.

#### **Stress on cross-border Terrorism :**

US has begun putting pressure on Pakistan to put an end to cross-border terrorism on a permanent basis. Ambassador Blackwill, for the first time cold-shouldered Hurriyat, when he visited Kashmir on the eve of elections. Subsequently, the ambassador told the alumni of Indian Institute of Technology in California that peaceful resolution of Kashmir issue could not be done "in a situation in which the terrible acts of terrorist violence that characterise J&K stop". He added that the LoC cannot be changed by violence and said, "in the absence of a jointly agreed Indo-Pakistani alternative, everyone should ensure that there is continued sanctity of the LoC" the Ambassador favoured increased people-to-people contacts and expanded trade relations as initial steps in normalisation. He minced no words in condemning those who were of the view that when identifying terrorists, there was a need to consider history, circumstances and other subtleties. He argued : "To the contrary I say that defeating terrorism for US and India is not subtle. It is a matter of survival for ourselves, for our democratic values, for our religious freedom, for our children, for everything we hold dear. Let us please name those for what they are who murder innocent for political motives and who seek to bring down the very pillars of democracy. These murderers are not misunderstood ideals, they are not disadvantaged dissidents, they are not religious perfectionists and they, most assuredly, are not freedom fighters. They are terrorists and we should be careful always to call them exactly that".

On January 23, 2003, Nancy Powell, US Ambassador to Pakistan told top businessmen at the American business council meet in Karachi : "Pakistan must ensure its pledges are implemented to prevent infiltration across LoC and end to use of Pakistan as a platform for terrorism. I cannot overstate the importance of all parties working to end the culture of violence that afflicts Kashmir. We continue to look for ways to encourage peace in Kashmir. One important step could be a ceasefire along the LoC".

Two days later, Richard Boucher, US state department spokesperson said : "Infiltration has gone down and come back somewhat...We do believe infiltration should stop completely and that is an issue that we do continue to work with the govt. of Pakistan. The US secretary of state, Colin Powell, addressing the annual meeting of the World Economic Forum at Davos, Switzerland remarked : "No American 'hidden hand can remove the distrust between India and Pakistan. That is they must do for themselves. It is crucial that they both take risks for peace on the subcontinent and work to normalise relations".

The US officials also told the visiting Pakistan Foreign Minister, Khurshid Kasuri that the onus was on Pakistan to take steps that could lead to talks with India. These moves included controlling cross-border infiltration, respecting the sanctity of LoC, and responding to India's suggestion of normalising trade relations. Compounding all this, Pakistan was also called in to account for its nuclear proliferation activity, particularly its ties to North Korea. Earlier, Gen. Musharraf, to allay US fears, had ruled out accidental nuclear war with India. He had also said that there was no danger of nuclear assets falling into wrong hands.

**Indian Reaction:**

India does not hold much hope. So long as US continues to regard Pakistan as an anti-war ally, American exhortations to Pakistan on cross-border terrorism will remain unheeded. The Indian leadership has displayed a matured response in not putting much hope on the present American posturing. It has formulated a two-pronged diplomatic strategy: One, consolidate counter-terrorism and two, launch a sustained diplomatic campaign. This strategy stems from the assessment that Pakistan is preparing an aggressive strategy to foment terrorism in India. The Indian leaders have expressed disappointment at US for not putting enough pressure on Pakistan to dismantle structures and sources of terrorism. Mr KC Pant, Deputy Chairman of Planning Commission, demanded de-radicalisation of Pakistan as was done in post war Germany and Japan. He demanded, "The Americans should consider tackling the root of the problem and not just its manifestation in Pakistan". Explaining the Indian stand, Mr Yashwant Sinha, the External Affairs Minister said, "We have to systematically chok off the four crucial lifelines of the terrorist groups: refuge, finance, arms and any remaining ambivalence on the part of the international community". He made these remarks in a presentation on India-EU relations-perspectives in the 21st Century at the Penteion University, Athens. For the present, there are no takers on that US role is changing from being part of the problem to become part of the solution.

## **20 14 years of Exile**

### *Nation must care for Kashmiri Pandits*

**By Dr. Shakti Bhan Khanna**

Kashmiri Hindus have become the frontline victims of the proxy war being waged by Pakistan and other Islamist outfits. Their ethnic-cleansing would not have happened had Kashmiri Muslim society not succumbed to communal and fundamentalist propaganda of separatists. Total collapse of the law and order apparatus and abdication of their role by Valley-based political parties too contributed to the process. If sometimes the vested interests point accusing fingers at the former governor, the implication is only to hide these failures.

The Indian state, its political leadership and the civil society all underplayed this ethnic-cleansing, a unique phenomenon in the post-independent India. There was a reason. It was argued, it will delicate the precarious communal balance in the country. Many politicians and academics overshot it by describing the exodus as a contrived affair. They even went to praise rabidly fundamentalist groups and accused Pandits' of grabbing all jobs. This propaganda had a two-fold purpose. One, to project the fundamentalist fascist uprising in Kashmir as a 'national-liberation' movement. Secondly, to dilute the national sympathy for the victims of ethnic-cleansing. Now, when solutions are being advocated, a different type of slander campaign is on, to bypass pandits in any future dispensation.

#### **Fourteen years of Exile :**

Fourteen years of turmoil have taken heavy toll of the community. Nearly 1200 people were killed by the terrorists and scores maimed. Hard life in exile amidst financial and social insecurity has made disease rampant amongst refugees. Every month, on an average seventy people die. Diabetes, Heart disease, respiratory problems due to unhealthy, cramped accommodation impose an addition burden on paltry relief. Suicides, deaths in road traffic accidents and snake-bites, increasing incidence of psychiatric illness, are the new things that Kashmiri Pandits are experiencing. There are not even twenty new births in the community per month. The reasons being late marriages, lack of privacy, financial insecurity, bleak failure, divorces etc. The community is being slowly pushed to a state of negative growth.

Nearly 27,000 houses have been looted, nine thousand burnt, and eight thousand damaged. A thousand houses are either fraudulently or forcibly occupied. Orchards have been destroyed, shops grabbed. The last act has been to create a situation in which an exiled Pandit has no option but to dispose of his property in distress. For the last fourteen years Pandits have been facing genocide due to apathetic attitude of the state administration. The massive litigation imposed on the displaced community would shame any civilised society. From ex-gratia relief to granting of house-rent, in every case the community is forced to resort to litigation. Nothing happens in routine.

The nation is silently watching the ongoing genocide of displaced Pandits. It does not augur well for Indian unity. There have been exceptions. Pandits shall never forget the contribution of Messers Bala Saheb Thackeray, Madan Lal Khurana or Murli Manohar Joshi in lessening the rigors of genocide. They stand apart from others. Even this modest help has not been liked by the communal elements in Valley.

#### **Nation's responsibility:**

Kashmiri Pandits are tired of the proforma statements dished out by politicians of different hue from time to time. Pandits do not need sympathy. They want action on the ground. Late Rajesh Pilot once talked of creating a 'Ministry of Rehabilitation' for displaced people from Kashmir in the Central government. The proposal died with his death.

The Centre is playing games with Pandits. Mr IK Gujral once said in Nagrota camp, "If India's all the coffers go empty in helping Pandits to return to their homeland, we will not mind". What did he do to follow this up? If the nation fails to restore the entire Pandit community to their homeland, its implications are obvious. There will be no secularism in the country. Similarly if Kashmiris fail to restore religious pluralism, on what moral grounds can they demand nation's sympathy. Return of 'Kashmiri

Pandits, by creating stakes for them, has to be an integral part of any national reconstruction in Kashmir. It has to be a two-way affair.

It is the duty of the nation to find out who is pushing this patriotic community towards genocide and then decide solutions. Responsibility needs to be fixed. Nation's silence will not do. Recently, the Pandit Teachers in State government, higher-up in the seniority list, were bypassed for promotions. When the victims protested, the state government, to cover this up, asked Pandits whether they were prepared to serve in Valley. Why was this question put only to Pandits and not others? If for reasons of security, Pandits are not able to go, who was responsible? Pandits do not need healing touch, they need impartial and not sectarian governance.

**Deprivations:**

Displaced Pandits have three sets of problems—consequences of uprootment in Valley, difficulties in exile and the issue of return. Problems of social cohesion and identity are its internal problems and the community is seized of it.

**Consequences of uprootment in Valley:**

1) Restoration of properties: Pandit properties still existing in Valley have been in many cases forcibly occupied by the locals. In many cases, fraudulent documents have been forged to make the cases sub-judice. This is time-consuming and renders government paralysed for any quick action. Police and illegal occupants in some cases have entered into a nexus making eviction evasive.

**Solution:**

A special tribunal should be reconstituted for quick disposal of sub-judice cases and heavy penalty should be imposed on those who have fraudulently occupied Pandit houses. This will act as a deterrent. Forcible occupation of Pandit property or any damage to it should be made a penal offence. There is also large-scale encroachment of arable lands, orchards, business concerns etc. A special revenue officer should be appointed to look into encroachment or tempering of revenue records. All distress sales should be stopped and previous sales nullified.

ii) Damaged houses and other property should be fully compensated. An agency to make estimates should also include Pandit representatives. Owing to communal bias, damage to Pandit property is generally undervalued. Balance of ex-gratia relief should be immediately released. There should be total transparency in the process.

iii) Agriculture Sector: Compensation against the loss of orchard and agriculture income be paid. What Pandits are receiving by way of relief is pittance, compared to the regular income from orchards, agriculture or forestry. Damages to orchards like felling of trees, dismantling of hutments and other developmental structures be paid.

iv) Traders and industrialists: Shops particularly those at prime locations have been grabbed. These should be restored. There should be reasonable compensation for the loss of business and loans without interest should be granted for re-starting business. Rehabilitation of Pandit business community would need special care, meaning giving them facilities to obtain contractor cards, transport cards and the rest.

vi) Shrines and Religious places: Shrines belonging to Pandits in different villages and towns have suffered due to neglect, damage, encroachment etc. The State administration should come out with full details as well as the present state of these shrines. It must allow Pandit delegations to visit Valley and assess for themselves the damage. The state administration must create fund for the repair of all these shrines and get encroachments vacated. Sham boards created by the previous government should be dissolved. Pandit community will itself take care of its shrines.

**Genocide in Exile:**

Services: Routine service benefits, as given to other employees of state should be restored. Promotions denied to Pandit employees should be restored with effect from due date. All supersessions should be annulled. Punishment postings should be cancelled forthwith. In service professional trainings should be restored for Pandit employees. Services of displaced employees should be utilised properly by shifting



their posts from valley till normalcy is restored. All new appointments be done against posts fallen vacant due to retirement of Pandit employees. Extraordinary situations demand extraordinary solutions. Special recruitment drives not only in Police but in other departments also should be launched. Farooq Abdullah govt recruited 1.50 lakh employees. What was Pandits' share in this? Today out of 4 lakh state govt employees there are just six thousand Pandits. With orchards and other businesses gone, for What Pandits are to stay in state or return to Kashmir? Any talk of return needs to address this issue first. Employees retiring from service have to struggle to finalise pension cases and recovering GPF and other dues. Special mechanism needs to be devised for speedy disposal of these and other family pension cases.

(ii) Educational Institutions: There should be no hurdles for running of Pandit community's educational institutions. All discrimination should be ended forth with.

(iii) Living conditions in the camps need to be improved and adequate medical cover should be provided. There is a need to involve social workers and others to help the refugees combat stress and look after the neglected. There is also need for streamlining the registration procedure.

Pandits deprivations in exile have compounded because of central govt's hesitancy in declaring them as refugees. So it is moral duty of govt to see that their problems are immediately and adequately attended.

### **Issue of return**

The issue of return requires national consensus and national will. Token return of a hundred or two hundred families will only convince that Indian govt has no political will to restore Pandits to their homeland, and it cannot tackle bigger issues. This will undermine its prestige at international level.

The return is also linked with political mobilisation on this issue in valley and strong action against vested interest in valley creating hurdles. There is also need to create a law and order apparatus on which the returnees can have faith and resettle Pandits in a manner that will help them to perpetuate for all times to come. With all the means of livelihood snatched, talk of return without rebuilding economic life is sheer hypocrisy. There is a need for creating national fund for this.

At the deterrent level, there is a need to appoint a commission of inquiry into all aspects of exodus, including failure of law and order and fixing of responsibility. All the terrorists involved in killing of Pandits and other innocent Kashmiris need to be tried in specially designated courts. There is also need to take action against those who try to incite communal hatred or undermine religious and ethnic pluralism. An internally tranquil Kashmiri society will be better equipped to deal with threats that undermine democracy, pluralism, law and order and toleration. It will create conditions for emergence of a much desirable healthy civil society.

*\*The author is a renowned Gynecologist and heads 'Daughters of Vitasta'.*

## 21 Indigenous Rishis v/s Sayyid-Sufis from Central Asian Lands

### Differentiations & Contradictions—II

--The guardians of the shrines, living easily with marvels, said the mosque had been built by Mohammad Bin Qasim who had conquered Sindh in 710 A.D. & that the tree was also from that time it would have been a tree Mohammad Bin Qasim knew. The tree might not have been as old as that; and the mosque was certainly later. But the mosque had been given the Mohammad Bin Qasim association to celebrate the conquest--the faithful no longer saw themselves as the conquered--also claim the ancient site for the new faith. —V.S. Naipaul Nobel Prize Laurate from **Beyond Belief**

#### By Prof. M.L. Koul

THE Sayyid-sufis of various orders (*silsilas*) failed to present a cogently structured teleological view of spirituality. Being poetical in their approach and premise the exponents of such orders (*silsilas*) stipulated varied positions in regard to the essential issue of ultimate destination of a seeker. The pull of concordance and conformity with the fundamental concerns of Islamic theology had the concomitant outcome of stunting the sovereign growth of the Sufi orders (*silsilas*) as thought-models based on theoretical constructs buttressed by lived praxes.

It is apt to state that *Sufism* holistically could not achieve recognition as a well-defined thought-system in keeping with its original nuances and motivations of heralding a thought-force in conflict with the rigidities of Islamic law and doctrine. Like the Kharigies (externalists), the outbursts of numerous *sufis* under the impact of neo-platonists and Buddhists and Vedantins were ruthlessly suppressed by denouncing them as rebellious and heretical, thus stilling the voice of dissent and difference.

The rebellious expression of Bayazid that his banner was greater than that of Mohammad and the stunning cry of Mansur that he was God/Truth rendered all hues of *sufis* suspect in the eyes of the dogma-ridden Muslim world. They were sternly censured and severely condemned. To the utter shock of religious liberals Mansur was physically eliminated after torture. The idea of 'fana' as the telos of spiritual journey stunned the hide-bound Muslim dogmatists as it devalued and belittled the observance of ritual obligations. Ibn-i-Arabi, was condemned as a heretic for his 'Wahadatul Wujud' formulation which not only contradicted but also negated the Quranic doctrine of '*tawhid*' by confounding God with world. Zikr (remembrance of God), borrowed from the Hindus, was permitted as a tool for spiritual orientation. But '*sama*' (dance and singing), equally popular with the Hindus, was denounced as 'heretical'. The Sayyid-Sufis, who came over to Kashmir carried with them the legacy of a perennial conflict between mysticism and theology and its rigours. Steeped in orthodoxy, they, donning the robes of *sufis*, made a cocktail of mysticism and theology and presented it as an intolerant and proselytizing faith and posited it against the native religious-cum-spiritual expressions, not only highly tolerant but also assimilative of dissent and difference.

It is well-known that love is the key motif of *Sufism*. In the domain of Persian poetry love has found artistic expressions and has been typified as a symbol to intensify mystical love. Theoretically love has not matured into an effective symbolism as to resolve the perennial conflict between mysticism and strait-jacket of theology. The *sufis* for fear of persecution weakly accepted the Quranic dicta defining love and its parameters. They showed no intellectual boldness and spiritual independence which could have set them apart from the theological rigours thereby setting ablaze a trail of new development in the domain of *sufism* as a mode of thought. They could not establish a love-nexus with God for mystical heights. The Quranic injunction that God as the creator of man cannot have any love-bond with the created clipped the wings of their thought and spiritual conceptualisations. They could not conceive of any meaning of love other than that of obedience or submission.

In sharp contrast to the semitic colour of love symbolism, the native visualisation about love is spiritually elevating and exhilarating. As a highly emotive state of human psyche it exponentially upswings a seeker to the condition of synthesis as one with God. Music, dance and hymn-singing in ecstasy are

recognised as pious accoutrements to heighten love and its allied states with the clear objective of attaining synergy with love i.e. God.

Mira as a seeker of love-nexus with Krishna, her destination of love, ascends to the state of total absorption into her love i.e. Krishna. In native parlance, love and God are interchangeable. Love is God and God is love. Unimpeded union with love is bliss and separation from love is pains. Love has spiritual contours and is suffused with spiritual content. To be exact, love is defined as spirituality incarnate. More than most, love is pregnant with humanistic content and has served as a source to renaissance stagnant societies to achieve new dynamism and flowering.

As models of ossified orthodoxy, the Central Asian Sayyid-*sufis* were stunned to find the natives harbouring a maze of beliefs strung together by love as an elevating elixir potent enough to push a seeker to the state of unity with God. Such a belief, to them, was sheer heresy controverting the Quranic position. That there is a yawning chasm between man and God and God leaves the world to its own fate after He creates it was what chilled their philosophical and mystical insight.

The Sayyid-*sufis* when in Kashmir were completely dazed to find the natives sticking to the concept of God as transcendental and immanent too. Even after crippling conversions the natives continued with the cultural inheritance of Shiva as the creator of cosmos. In manifestation mode He was Shakti which at mass level was known as 'She', an abbreviated form of Shakti. To dis-inherit them from their cultural treasure as a precious legacy the Sayyid-*sufis* devised a plethora of measures to re-baptize them after coercive conversions through Jazia (poll-tax) and levers of state power including army.

Absolutely deficient in arduous cultivation as inquisitive and enquiring minds the Sayyid-*sufis* made not even meagre efforts to have a casual peep into the native mind and its creative expressions in varied segments of human knowledge including aesthetics. As representatives of a civilisation that had long back frozen in time and place, they as hard-core missionaries embarked upon an insidious mission of ravaging, looting and arsoning the architectural heritage of the natives which they derisively called idol-houses, where devotees (*bakhtas*) prayed and *sang* in accompaniment with indigenous musical instruments for value enrichment and spiritual enhancement. Having inherited legacy of boorish contempt for music, dance and hymn-singing as spiritual components, they as votaries of Shariat and Sunna carried the burden of responsibility for the imposition of barbaric ban on music, dance and hymn-singing that the natives were wedded to. At the prodding of a Sayyid-*sufi* of Kubrawi variety, Sultan Sikandar, launched a genocidal onslaught on the religious leitmotifs of the natives with a view to stamping them out. Temples of aesthetic and cultural import were brutally levelled. It is shocking to recall that Sultan Sikandar made use of gun-powder known as hard-ware of war to shatter the Martand Temple acclaimed as 'epitome of architecture', 'music in stone' and 'gem of Indian architecture'. Prior to the destruction of the temple he deployed a team of sadists who cruelly hammered its sculptural wealth of high artistic value and merit to smithereens. Mir Ali Hamadani, a Kubrawi *sufi*, said to be a Shia-Muslim by faith, was the first to write the iconoclastic chapter of Kashmir history. Baharistan-i-Shahi, a Muslim chronicle in Persian, applauds him for demolition of the Kali-shree temple, an icon of native faith and religion, to raise a Muslim prayer-place at the site. Mir Shams-ud-Din Araki, again a Sayyid-*sufi* of Shia faith was a highly motivated Vandal who fanatically destroyed numerous temples throughout the Valley.

As evidenced by Jonraj, the author of second Rajtarangini, Sultan Sikandar spared no effort worth the name to erase all traces of indigenous knowledge and learning as enshrined in books with the sole purpose of cleansing the land of infidelity. As a psychopath he added new chapters to the Muslim history of burning books. The Hindu houses were ransacked and looted and the treasure-trove thus got was pitilessly burnt or consigned to rivers, lakes and wells or buried down the earth. Records Srivar—

*'Sikandar burnt the books the same way as fire burns hay. verse—75*

*'All the scintillating works faced destruction in the same manner that lotus flowers face with the onset of frosty winter'. verse—77*

*'The erudites of that period witnessing the enmass destruction of books by Muslims fled their land with some books through mountain routes'. —verse-76*

With a view to eradicating the well-entrenched spiritual foundation of the natives the Sayyid-*sufis* drawing tremendous support from the ruling Muslim dispensation removed their sacred threads as a mark of their initiation, forced them to recite *kalima*, got them circumcised and thrust lumps of beef into their mouths. As most of their religious literature especially '*Yogavashisht*' and '*Bhagvat Puranum*' was destroyed, they were anguished to have hand-written copies of the Quran which they could not read or recite nor were there local *pirs* or *mullahs* who could have provided them the initial lessons. The natives placed under siege to an alien religion were huddled in groups to say prayers in the Islamic mode, but soon after dispersal they visited their destructed temples to bow to their gods of ancestors. After strictness was enforced the natives hid *shiva-lingas* under their sleeves before they were herded for prayers which they never considered of any spiritual essence. When the practice was detected, they were forced to raise and down their arms before they settled for prayers. Though converted to Islam, the natives were suspected of pursuing their instinctive practices and when most of them were decreed to say prayers in their homes in presence of Sayyid-*sufis* acting as moral and religious police, they placed their haunches on the sacred text and recited their old hymns and litanies. Shell-shocked by such defiance, they were stigmatized as apostates and put to the sharp blades of a sword on days sacred to Muslims. For such horrible details Baharistan-i-Shahi and Tohfatul Ahabab as the Muslim chronicles in Persian can be consulted for corroboration and gruesome details.

When in the highly fertile soil of Kashmir blessed with salubrious climate, the Sayyid-*sufis* settled in the land of natives, practically as aliens, in fact, bewitched by its beauties taking it as the land of paradisaical legend as they had read in the Quranic accounts, most of them married the native converts and acquired Jagirs through favours from the Muslim state. Their missionary zeal over the years evaporated as a result of better prospect of life which they could not have dreamt of in their native places. Mir Shams-ud-Din Araki as a purist of classical variety castigated the *mullahs* for following the ways of the *kafirs* (infidels) while giving send-off to their daughters at the time of their marriages. Over-lording the bands of new-found followers begging for ordinary doles the Sayyid-*sufis* drafted them on missions of demolishing temples housing the venerated gods and goddesses of the natives and temples of learning. As there were ethnic and cultural affinities between the neo-converts and the resilient natives the Sayyid-*sufis* drilled their de-humanised followers into the lessons of hate and contempt for the resilient for being '*kafirs*' (infidels) and idolatrous. A handful of Sayyid-*sufis* continued with the mission of conversions by establishing *langars* (eating places) as a source of allurement for the new entrants to Islam and as a weapon to keep the converted to Islam. Such public-kitchens were financed by the government agencies through grant of Jagirs to the zealots donning the robes of *sufis*. The public-kitchen of Bulbulshah was financed by Rinchen, a Ladakhi born converted to Islam. Mir Mohammad Hamadani was heavily financed by Sultan Sikander for all his missionary enterprises including setting up of a public-kitchen for the converts. Mir Shams-ud-Din Araki was given gold, silver and jewels by Musa Raina, the Prime Minister of Sultan Mohammad Shah, for purposes of building worshipping places for his Shia followers at the sites where he had destructed Hindu temples and shrines. The Sayyid-*sufis* utilised the revenues accruing from the Jagirs granted to them by the Muslim rulers of all hues for subversion of the land in terms of politics and religion. The strong contradictions between the local converts and the alien Sayyid-*sufis* led to battles resulting in the expulsion of the Sayyid-*sufis* from Kashmir. The native converts coined '*Saad makar*' or cunning Sayyids as a derogatory nomenclature for them when they practically took control of government machinery and turned it into an instrument of coercion and oppression.

If they are called terrible actors veering between belligerence and prietism it might not shock many.



## ***22 Lyngdoh: Vindictive & Partisan-Act II***

**By Prof. Hari Om**

Chief Election Commissioner (CEC), JM Lyngdoh, is misusing his constitutional position and crossing all limits and thus causing damage to the country's democratic polity. He is taking decisions that can be legitimately dismissed with a shake of head as politically motivated, partisan and highly discriminatory and outrageous. In fact, one is inclined to conclude that the CEC has become a "kingdom within a kingdom" and assumed the role of a "super government". One is also forced to think that he has allowed his whole approach to the election-related issues and other developments, political or otherwise, to be significantly influenced by what may be described as his anti-BJP, and pro-Congress and pro-Left attitude.

Consider, for example, his January 8, 2003, Shimla statement on the "people from outside of Himachal". And, do not forget that he had gone to Shimla to personally make an on-the-spot assessment of the political environment in the otherwise calm and quite BJP-ruled Himachal Pradesh (HP) and find if the same was conducive for election. His Shimla statement clearly smacks more of a bias against the BJP and a substantial chunk of the Indian population than a resolve to hold elections in HP in a fair and impartial manner. That day, he virtually poured venom and said : "Himachal is an orderly State, where people are well behaved. Himachalis must ensure that people from outside of the State are not allowed to come to the State and abuse the elections, especially using religion and other things..I want them to make sure, as we don't allow outsiders to come and make mess... The people of Himachal must stop" all those who wish to "play the 'Hindutva' card in the elections".

Now, who has given the CEC the authority to dub the people from outside of the State unruly, undesirable and disturbers of communal harmony? Who has empowered him to tell the people of HP to prevent the non-Himachalis from entering their State during the time of election?

At least, the law of the land does not permit him to make loose statements or paint certain selected political formations and people black. Anyone who is familiar with Article 324 of the Indian Constitution and the June 15 and 16, 1949 debates in the Constituent Assembly, as also with what one of the leading framers of our statute book KM Munshi said on June 16, 1949, would certainly share this view and surely opine that the CEC is abusing his constitutional position. I may be mentioned that K.M. Munshi had, among other things, said : "...There will be great political danger" if the Election Commission "becomes...a political power in the country".

Again, look at Lyngdoh's attitude towards the BJP and non-BJP-ruled States like Jammu and Kashmir, Gujarat, HP, Meghalaya, Nagaland and Tripura. He found the situation in J&K in August 2002 absolutely normal and conducive for electoral exercise. He completely overlooked the brutal killings and destruction in the terrorist-infested J&K. He also ignored the fact that nearly three lakh Kashmiri Hindus and Sikhs have been thrown out from their home, and have been languishing in the refugee camps in different parts of the country since January 1990, when the protagonists of Islamic rule unleashed their anti-India campaign and campaign of terror against the minorities in order to rid the Valley of all pro-India elements and implement their sectarian and religio-political agenda. The truth is that Lyngdoh repudiated all suggestions and passionate pleas outright against holding of elections in the State and virtually deprived the victims of terror of their right to vote. He, in addition, did not utter a single word against the terrorist-related violent incidents, which later on resulted in the brutal murder of over 800 persons in a short span of nine weeks commencing from August 2, when he announced the election schedule in J&K.

But in the case of the BJP-ruled Gujarat the CEC adopted an altogether different approach. In fact, the way the CEC responded to the well-intentioned democratic suggestion of the Narendra Modi in favour of early elections in Gujarat in order to obtain people's verdict on his government simply betrayed a deep sense of distrust on the part of the CEC against the BJP. He only went by the "secular" propaganda against the idea of elections under the "Hindutva brigade" led by Narendra Modi and sought to bring Gujarat under President rule with a view to ensuring what he called "free and fair elections" there, Lyngdoh



thwarted each and every offer of Narendra Modi under one pretext or the other. Narendra Modi's well-founded assertions that the situation in Gujarat was normal, that the Board Examinations, Mahashivratri and Muharram had all passed off without any communal incident, and that there was perfect peace and normalcy all over the State when the Hajjis returned from Mecca had no effect whatsoever on him. He went on deferring elections on the plea that a few thousand Muslims had left their homes and taken shelter in various relief camps due to communal riots, that the situation in the State was not really normal and that the electoral rolls were grossly incomplete. He ordered elections in the State—and much against his wishes—only when he was left with no other option by the ever-watchful Supreme Court. And, as expected, there was no election-related violence anywhere in Gujarat.

There are umpteen other instances that one can refer in order to substantiate the charge that the CEC is biased against a particular political formation. Since it is not possible to catalogue here all such instances, just three of them are referred to, to make a point. One is his stand on the not-so-peaceful Nagaland, Meghalaya and Tripura. It needs to be underlined that he has announced the election schedule for all these States without visiting any of them and this is something quite unusual. The other is his January 11 New Delhi declaration that “he does not anticipate any problem in Nagaland”. What was his argument? His only argument was : “No-disruption assurance from the NSCN (I-M) militant leaders, Isaac Swu and Thuinggaleng Muivah”. And, thirdly, his refusal to take action against a Meghalaya Minister, R.A. Lyngdoh, who, according to the January 18 PTI report, inaugurated a school building in his Sohiong constituency after the announcement of election date. His argument was that “the minister was not informed about the announcement”. Not just this, he also further added: “Had it happened elsewhere where people do things intentionally, the Commission would have taken stern action”.

That Lyngdoh visited Gujarat twice to personally assess the law and order situation there and rejected outright all arguments advanced by the man on the spot—Chief Minister Narendra Modi—but would repose full confidence in the Naga militants and order elections in the north-eastern non-BJP-ruled States without meeting the mainstream political leadership of the region should clean all cobwebs of confusion. There is no doubt whatever that J.J. Lyngdoh is sidestepping law and making distinctions between the BJP and non-BJP-ruled States.

It is no wonder that he has become an object of ridicule and criticism. He would do well to follow the code of conduct prescribed for him by the Constitution in the same way he expects the people and political parties to follow the code of conduct laid down for them by the Election Commission. Not to do so would be to undermine the authority of such a crucial institution as the one he is heading. Equally desirable on his part would be to read and memorise what Naziruddin Ahmad said in the Constituent Assembly on June 16, 1949. He had said : “Election is a most important item in a democratic set-up and it is very necessary that it should be controlled and supervised by a very competent, independent and impartial body”.

*\*The writer is member, ICHR and official spokesman, State BJP.*

## 23 Disinformation on Pandit ethnic cleansing continues

### *Why Do Indian Muslim intellectual paranoid about Kashmiri Hindus?*

"The ethnic cleansing of 2,48,000 Kashmiri Pandits contained within it all the seeds of an ethno-religious movement, the like of which the world has witnessed in recent times in erstwhile Yugoslavia and Rwanda. Had the Pandits dithered or delayed their departure from the Valley, they too would have suffered the cruel fate of Serbs and Muslims Croats in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The eviction of the Pandits must also be viewed against the background of 97 Hindu temples being destroyed since 1990, a fact that has been underplayed in the overall interests of communal harmony and religious amity".

--Major General Arjun Ray in "Kashmir Diary—Psychology of Militancy.

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### **Hindal Tyabji, a (non Kashmiri) Muslim Bureaucrat**

"There should have been no need for the Hindus to leave the Valley. After all, we have not had communal riots here like there have been in other parts of India...

Jagmohan has denied that the government deliberately encouraged the Hindus to leave and provided them with transport. What I can say is that the government certainly didn't discourage them. The local police did say things like "The militants will use your houses to hide in and we don't want you to get hurt". And some of the Hindus did leave in military transport...

It suits the government to have Hindu refugees in Jammu. They can be shown to foreign visitors as an example of the suffering caused by the militants. At the same time because their property has not been protected, it has been taken over by locals who have a vested interest--so the problem is a criminal land mafia, not communal".

—"India in Slow Motion" By Mark Tully

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### **Ghulam Mohammad Sofi, The Editor Srinagar Times**

*Q: As per a survey by Kashmir Images, a weekly published in Kashmir, 68 per cent Muslims believe that Pandits betrayed them in their hour of distress. Do you agree?*

Sofi: No I am not in agreement at all. The Kashmiri Pandits were not in a position to help in any way. They were compelled to leave their homes, their jobs, and their land overnight. So what is this betrayal all about?

*Q: The reference obviously is to suffering of common Muslims in the street during cordon-cum-search operations, crackdowns and arbitrary arrests resorted to by the security forces to control the militancy. Have they not been wronged?*

Sofi: Majority community should understand that they are the victims of a proxy war. This war was neither engineered nor supported by Pandits. In fact they were the first victims of the scheme which forced them to leave the state. Therefore this is an unfair "charge" against Pandits.

*Q: The political chief of Jamaat-i-Islami says that not a single cadre of his "Jammat" was responsible for Pandit killings. What is your view?*

Sofi: (Smiles): Technically he may be right. Even today they claim that there is no connection between the present killings and Jamaat-i-Islami. But the ground realities should also support their views.

*Q: Most people in the Valley blame Mr. Jagmohan, the erstwhile Governor of the state, for encouraging the Pandit flight. Do you agree?*

Sofi: It is a total lie. It is a part of systematic propaganda. The Pandit flight from the Valley was the sequel to a plan hatched well in advance from the state. It had nothing to do with Jagmohan.

*Q: Why could Mr. Jagmohan not organise Pandit camps in some among the 30-odd military stations in the Valley itself?*

Sofi: The situation was too bad for Jagmohan when he assumed office. Mr Rajiv Gandhi (not prime minister then) came for an overnight visit. Both I and Jagmohan were present in Centaur Hotel in the lake. Rajiv Gandhi said, "Kashmir is slipping away from us". Such was the situation for Jagmohan. Even Mr. M.L. Fotedhar and the then Dy. Prime Minister, Mr Devi Lal, were accompanying Rajiv Gandhi when he said so.

*Q: What was the problem in housing the Pandits in makeshift barracks, schools, dharmshalas, institutional army buildings close to military stations? The whole race of Pandits would have been saved the tragedy of deserting their homeland?*

Sofi: One has to appreciate the January 1990 situation in the Valley. Jagmohan stayed in Jammu for one night. He took a flight from Jammu and arrived in Srinagar Raj Bhavan the next day. He called some of his friends. He called me too. Had I known that the situation was as bad as it later turned out to be, frankly, I would not have gone to Raj Bhavan. There were just three people in the room when I arrived in Srinagar Raj Bhavan. He offered a cup of tea to me but there was nobody to bring one. I saw him go towards the kitchen three times; presumably, he made the tea himself. There was no administration worth the name anywhere in the state, I mean in the Valley. The police stations all over the Valley were centres of operation for the militants. Jagmohan could not have done anything. Nearly 32,000 Kashmiri Pandits' houses have been burnt since 1991. Is there Jagmohan's hand in this too? People like you, even in 1997, need courage to come to the Valley. Otherwise it is still not safe here. Look what happened in Sangrampura in March 1997 when seven Pandits were mercilessly gunned down.

*Q: What is your opinion of the Kashmir Images Survey in which 76% Muslims population wanted the Kashmiri Pandits back in the Valley?*

Sofi: The fact is that even today your erstwhile neighbours wish that you all should come back. They would even extend warm hospitality to you when you visit them. But even they will be harbouring a sense of fear while dealing with Pandits. We all need to wait for normalcy which is not yet in sight.

—"Interview with Omkar Razdan in *"The Trauma of Kashmir-The Untold Reality*

## 24 *Harkats committing a mistake*

**By David Devadas**

It is hardly surprising that the Harkat-ul-Jihad-e-Islami should try to prevent Kashmir's women from working. Several Pakistan-based organisations run madarsas but the Harkat groups, including Harkat-ul-Mujahideen and Harkat-ul-Ansar, have been spawned by the same set of madarsas that trained the Taliban in the early and mid-1990s. They have brought to Kashmir the same mindset from those conservative schools also imparted to the Taliban.

In trying to replicate what they did in Afghanistan here, however, they are making a mistake. They believe, of course, that there is only one correct way for all Muslim societies to conduct themselves but different ethnic groups have social mores as diverse as their environments, histories and cultures.

Former Kashmiri militants who did a stint in the Afghan "jihad" say they were amazed at the radically different mores they found there. Women in certain parts of that country were never seen and one could be killed for even glimpsing the women in a neighbour's house by mistake. By contrast, Kashmiris do not by and large subscribe to such limiting notions of what makes for a good Islamic society. Kashmiris are apt to quote from the life of the Prophet to cite the high esteem and responsibilities he gave to women, even in his own family. Interaction between men and women is generally very open, not only within homes but outside too.

Kashmiri women have since time immemorial shared with men the responsibilities not only of raising families but also of running the household and the economy. This is particularly true of agriculture, which remains even today the largest sector of the Kashmiri economy. When the paddy crop is sown in May and June, women can be seen in the verdant terraced fields across the valley, and again when the time for harvest comes round in September. Through the summer, they can be seen striding to those fields to make sure there is just enough water.

Older Kashmiris talk of women working in the fields ever since they can remember and probably throughout history. In fact, they say, Pandit women remained sheltered at home more often than Muslim women, who participated in sowing and harvesting, standing shoulder to shoulder with men, and tended the cattle that many rural families kept. When I asked a rural Kashmiri whether older women used to wear *burqas* when he was a boy, he shook his head and said with a grin that nobody could afford one. It was not the custom either, he added. The local Pir—Kashmir being full of Sufi Pirs more so then than now — would keep a few *burqas*, which older women would sometimes borrow for a wedding or other such major occasion and then return.

In fact, contrary to what one might imagine, Srinagar's women, particularly in the old town areas, are sometimes bound by more conservative social mores than rural ones. In more uptown areas of the city, of course, women participate in all kinds of economic activity. A young woman, head sedately covered by a scarf, can sometimes be seen driving a car alone on Srinagar's streets.

Upmarket localities are dotted with beauty parlours and boutiques, which are not only patronised by women but also quite often owned by them. I was once driving with a friend when he stopped the car, saying he had to visit his sister. Up some stairs, I found that it was not her home but her workshop that we had come to. She owns a small boutique, employing tailors to make the dresses she designs. She was obviously proud of her work and showed me some of the dresses, which were modern without being provocative. There were tassels and shiny beads on some of them, but there are obviously buyers for such clothes, which are certainly not conservative. What I found remarkable was that she runs this business at the edge of the generally conservative old town.

Whenever I have met her father, he has been dressed in traditional clothes, with an Islamic skull cap on his head, but he obviously finds nothing objectionable about this. Women can quite often be seen sitting together in cafes and restaurants in Srinagar, particularly in the upmarket Regal Chowk area. At the botanical gardens, couples can be seen sitting close together in almost every shady corner on just about any pleasant afternoon.

To try and replicate what the Taliban imposed in Afghanistan in this kind of society can only create a reaction. Already, over the past 13 years, Kashmir's women have several times defied diktats that they must wear *burqas*, even after acid was thrown at the faces of some. Under threat, women have donned *burqas* for a few days or weeks but they threw them off again each time. Now that their income and self-sufficiency is at stake, they could react with even more resolve.

*Source: The Tribune*



## 25 Factional fighting in Hizbul raises eye-brows

SRINAGAR, Jan 16: The latest infighting within the prominent Kashmiri militant group, the Hizbul Mujahideen (HM) between the pro-dialogue faction headed by Abdul Masjid Dar and hard liners led by Syed Salahuddin has raised important questions on the future of the militant movement in Jammu and Kashmir. Simmering differences between the two factions on whether to continue with militancy or show flexibility for a dialogue process, have come to the fore especially after formation of government by Mufti Mohd. Sayeed.

It is widely believed that Mufti Mohammed Sayeed's People's Democratic Party (PDP) had enjoyed tacit support of a majority of the Hizbul Mujahideen cadres, desirous of dialogue especially in South Kashmir from where PDP garnered maximum seats. Since the July 24, 2000 ceasefire initiative of the Hizbul Mujahideen, announced by the then Chief Operations Commander Abdul Majid Dar Hizbul Mujahideen cadres operating under difficult ground conditions have been in a quandary.

The ceasefire announcement had been initially endorsed by the Muzaffarabad based Hizbul Mujahideen Command Council led by Syed Salahuddin and subsequently withdrawn within a matter of days. The predominant feeling amongst HM cadres want that the ceasefire announcement was a good initiative and in keeping with the prevailing sentiment against violence among the people of the state. The lack of clarity and logical reasoning behind the withdrawal led many to believe that it was whimsical decision of HM supremo, Syed Salahuddin, the subsequent decision of the HM command council in April 2002 to expel Abdul Majid Dar and the predominant activists, Zafar-ul-Fatah, Dr Assad Yazdani and Zubair Central South and North division of Syed Salahuddin. Despite this drastic step, Abdul Majid Dar appealed for unity of the *tanzeem* which further endeared him to the cadres who said him as a senior field commander more in tune with ground realities and aspirations of the people. Emboldened by the lack of any evidence to his earlier decisions, Syed Salahuddin recently expelled three other Muzaffarabad based senior HM commanders Almaas, Nadeem and Tufail all perceived to be close to Abdul Majid Dar. This was the proverbial last straw on the camel's back and open dissidence against this decision surfaced.

Violent clashes broke out (Nov 17) at the HM camp at Haripur, where .. Salahuddin functionaries tried to quash the incipient rebellion and four of them including Imtiaz, a senior commander and Ibrahim, Salahuddin personal bodyguard were seriously injured, requiring his capitalisation. Pro-Majid activists have reportedly taken control of this camp thereafter it is also stated that alleged ISI controllers are in a quandary on the course of action to be adopted to stem this increasing factionalism in the most prominent local Kashmiri militant group. Salahuddin, meanwhile, continued to stay away from the faces in Saudi Arabia, where he was ostensibly on a visit to raise funds for the organisation. In reality, he was apprehensive of the kind of reception that he himself would receive at the HM camps. It is customary for a *tanzeem*'s student to visit camps and address his cadres on the eve of Eid. It is for the first time in the last 9 years since he assumed leadership of Hizbul Mujahideen that Salahuddin could not do so.

HM cadres both in J&K and AJK, meanwhile have openly started raising inconvenient questions about Syed Salahuddin's leadership of the *tanzeem* and his commitment to militancy. They point out to the fact that while Salahuddin exhorts his cadres to step up violence in J&K, himself is leading a luxurious life-style in the safe confines of a mansion in Rawalpindi. Swank Toyota double cabs and Pajeros ferry him and other commanders close to him, on their frequent visits to HM camps and other cadres live in relative hardship. They wonder how a militant leader who has never visited the battleground, in the Valley, in the last 9 years, could ever provide the required leadership. Even the present chief operations commander in J&K, Saiful Islam has been complaining to all and sundry about lack of proper logistic support including funds from base camp and blames Syed Salahuddin, like other Kashmiri leaders of the APHC, is more interested in power and money. They feel that for Salahuddin militancy is like a business shop to go on as usual, as it benefits him and his family.

They also point out to the fact that while Salahuddin exhorts Kashmiri youth to join jihad, his own children are pursuing their studies and leading normal life. One of his sons, Shakil is working as a

technician in the Sher-e-Kashmir Medical Institute, Soura, Srinagar and has been living in a government accommodation provided within the Institute's premises. Two other sons, Javed Yusuf and Wahid Yusuf are pursuing MSc and MBBS courses in Aligarh Muslim University and Government Medical College, Srinagar, respectively. The general public and HM cadres are particularly, indulged as to how Wahid, Yusuf, who was initially admitted to a private medical college in Jammu, subsequently managed his migration to the Government Medical College in Srinagar. They realise that such a migration from a private medical to a government run college could not have taken place without consent and of the highest echelons of the government and suspect that Salahuddin has managed to forge such links.

There are other well-grounded reasons to strengthen this suspicion that Syed Salahuddin while professing jihad to Kashmir youth, has been maintaining links with functionaries in the State government as well as in the Government of India. There have been media reports indicating Salahuddin's meeting (Feb. 2001) with a senior emissary from the Indian Prime Minister's office at Dubai, while on a visit ostensibly enroute Saudi Arabia for pilgrims. Recently, the brothers of Mushtaq Ahmed Zargar at Latram, the Al-Umar Chief had been taken into custody by J&K police, reportedly to pressurise Zargar. However, family members of Syed Salahuddin live in relative comfort in his ancestral village of Soibugh in Badgam district without ever in relative comfort in this ancestral village of Soibugh in Badgam district without ever being distributed by the security forces.

Whatever shape the current factional fighting within HM takes, Syed Salahuddin image amongst the people and cadres has taken a beating. They see him as whimsical and selfish person, who is totally out of touch with ground realities. They are demanding that instead of issuing statements for jihad from Pakistan, the last that Salahuddin should be doing is to come to the Valley and see the ground-swell of opinion in favour of peace and dialogue and against continuing violence.

## 26 From Tagore's land to Lalded's land

**By Dileep Kumar Kaul**

'Kashmir: Bittarkita Uttarakshikar' is, perhaps, the first ever book written about Kashmir, in Bengali, by two Bengali researchers Prabhat Goswami and Saroj Bandyopadhyaya, for the Bengalis. The title translated into English reads 'Kashmir: A disputed legacy', which reminds us of a book with the same title written by Alistair Lamb, many years ago. But this book has in no way influenced the Bengali book. The title has occurred to the authors spontaneously because the content of the book clearly visualises Kashmir as an Indian entity, contrary to what Alistair Lamb's book contains.

Before this, Jagmohan's 'Frozen Turbulence' was translated into Bengali as 'Stabdh Jhor' but it was not aimed at Bengali readers. This book examines all the aspects which constitute contemporary Kashmir including terrorism, traditions, folklore and history, but what is most important from the point of view of common Indians is that when asked about Kashmir most of them still say that 'Vaishno Devi' in Kashmir. To clarify the geography of Kashmir the very first chapter of the book has been written. This is the most beautiful reading on geography of Kashmir, I have ever come across. The three parts of the state are described as, "the whole state is like a three storeyed palace. The first storey is Jammu, after this the second storey is Kashmir and after that Ladakh, Baltistan, Gilgit etc. make the third storey". The spirit of Kashmir is very aptly described as, "poet's songs of praise, painter's brush, the clatter of invader's swords, the ascetic's hymns, together in a blend on one hand and the every changing faces of mother nature on the other hand constituted the cultural framework of this extraordinary part of earth". The lucidity and spontaneity of the language, in fact, makes the book attractive for all, the researcher or the common man. I am not aware of the response it has got in Bengal, but it must have been well received by the people in a land where everyone keeps some money every month to buy books.

Bengal is not merely a state of India. It is a phenomenon synonymous with Indian identity. So is Kashmir. Co-existence and religious tolerance are the key elements of both. Both have got personalities, poets or sages, who are loved by all, irrespective of caste, creed or colour. While discussing Lalded and her Vakhs (some of these are beautifully translated into Bengali by the authors), in the third chapter authors emphasise, "In every Vakh, the readers can find out the similarity with the songs of Rabindranath, Atul Prasad, Rajnikant Baul (a sect) or Lalan Faquir's songs".

In this very chapter the ancient traditions of folk music and folk literature of all the three parts of the state are underlined and their similarities with Bengal examined. Dogras, from the very beginning have been warriors. The valour of their heroes finds place in their folk songs. "Among these, the songs depicting the valour of Zorawar Singh and his associates Basti Ram, Ram Singh occupy a prominent place". The similarity of these with Bengali *Barangeeti* and *Karkangeeti* is emphasised. Like Bengali folk songs many Dogri songs also have Radha and Krishna as primary characters. In Ladakh spring is momentary, so there are many songs regarding spring. There also, they have songs about ancient heroes. One of them is Keshar.

Kashmiri songs and Bengali songs sound so similar that on hearing some Kashmiri songs some famous Bengali songs instantaneously rush to mind. *Ladishah*, the famous folk singing style of Kashmir, based on contemporary happenings is the same as Bengali *Hapu Gaan*.

What do these observations suggest? All the three parts of the state are one in spirit, in folk literature or music etc. In the book Bengal also appears to be a part of J&K or vice-versa. In this sense the book is the first and the foremost attempt to bring together two faraway states of India. It becomes amply clear that the basic constituting elements of India are not because of any religion or any composite culture, but due to an Indian spirit which has come into existence because of what its people have felt and borne for centuries. This spirit is the product of Indian people's ability to laugh, to struggle amidst the worst circumstances.

The authors understand the implications of Kashmir for the existence of India as a unified entity. That is why they have tried to have a holistic view of Kashmir (J&K) and linked it with the perspective of their

own society/state. If communities anywhere in the world, do not understand their perspective they will never attempt to dwell in the perspective of other communities and the world will become compartmentalized. If there are no meeting points between two social groups an attempt to evolve these must be done and whosoever does not do it, is bound to be wiped off this globe.

No serious attempt in this direction, in book or any other form has been made by anybody in our country. This book is a genuine attempt in that direction.

The unique identity of Kashmiri Brahmins is examined in their socio-cultural context. These are the people who have never compromised with the forces inimical to their country, who have a history of innumerable struggles as a community and who have always lived on their own terms, "All over India, the laws of Manu determine the way of life, behaviour and social status of a man, but with these people it is different. They have created their own Vedas and Shastras, a separate Gangotri and a Haridwar, and different customs and traditions for themselves. In ancient times they had attained heights of excellence, in intellect, knowledge and governance of the country. It is said that after the pilgrimage to Sharada Tirtha, Shankaracharya came to Kashmir and was not happy to see the way of life of these Brahmins.

But his influence did not affect them. Kashmiri Pandits were exiled several times. The apathy of Indian government towards their deplorable condition is a matter of deep regret. The quick spread of fundamentalism among Kashmiri Muslims and their cunning designs to cleanse Kashmir of Hindus have made Pandits to leave their land. Kashmiri Pandits in large numbers were compelled to live in camps in Jammu and Delhi. Their organisation 'Panun Kashmir' has not been able to awaken Delhi". This was written in 1999. The government is still apathetic but various KP and national organisations have endorsed the concept of a separate homeland for KPs in Kashmir, in one way or the other.

Questioning the 'Quit Kashmir Movement' of Sheikh Abdullah in 5th chapter the authors unequivocally make a point which most of the people are aware of but do not want to talk about, "to what extent was it a movement for independence and to what extent a crusade to get rid of Hindu rule is a matter of research". Sheikh Abdullah as a whole is taken into account in 6th chapter. He is explained as a tragic character of history. His immense potential as a leader and the tragic culmination is explained in detail. His character and life are summed up very meaningfully in following sentences, "overwhelmed with the dream of socialist revolution in his youth, Abdullah, the protest incarnate against the religious bigotry and the narrow minded Mulla-craze, became anti-Hindu, anti-Congress and intriguing, selfish Abdullah in his middle age. Rest of his life was spent as cruel Abdullah obsessed with the family legacy, securing a safe place for Farooq".

The contradictions in his life make a very interesting reading, "Abdullah's long life abounds with peculiarities. Popularity on one hand and imprisonment on the other, Prime Minister's chair on one hand and a seat in the jail on the other, an eyesore for Pakistan on one side and reliability with Indian enveloped in doubt on the other, unconditional praises showered on one hand on being released from jail and tight security to protect his tomb on the other. Rise and fall of Abdullah is between these contradictions". This makes Abdullah the most interesting character in Kashmir Politics. Abdullah's party National Conference along with Awami Action Committee, Jamaati-Islami and People's Conference are without any hesitation explained as protectors of Sunni interests.

It was not only Kashmiris but the *moulvis* from UP and Bihar also who came to Kashmir at the behest of Jamaati-Islami and untiringly lectured against Indian republic and constitution. The weak Indian state lacked principals and the government machinery in J&K also contributed to terrorism. Songs and music which inculcated the spirit of Jihad and destructiveness are also discussed.

The 9th chapter which is the last one examines different aspects of the Kashmir tangle. But unlike in most of the books about Kashmir, the authors do not unnecessarily sensationalise or make any high claims about suggesting the solutions. The book ends with a very humble question "*Anagat Bhavishyatai Bolte Pare, Kashmir Samasyai Samadhan Ki Bhave Hobe?* (Only the coming times will tell how the Kashmir problem will be solved?)

The famous Nirad Choudhary, before his death, had been all praise for this book. He had suggested an English translation for this book because the world needed such a book. The authors, in fairness, have started a movement, created a model to build bridges between different people. So this book deserves to be translated into Hindi also and if possible, in all the languages of the world.

*Kashmir Bitarkita Uttaradhikar (Bengali)*

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## ***27 Pandits observe Holocaust Day***

### **KS Correspondent**

JAMMU, Jan 19: Recalling the terrorising moments of January 19, 1990, Kashmiri Pandits pledged today to reject all those return plans that do not take cognisance of political and socio-economic aspirations of the community and expressed their full support to the struggle launched for achieving "Homeland".

Speaking on the function organised by "Panun Kashmir" at Sharika Peeth Sanstha, Subashnagar, to observe Holocaust Day, the speakers expressed their concern on the 'symbolic return' policy envisaged by Mufti government that does not take cognisance of ground situation prevailing in the Valley.

In his inaugural address, Chairman of Panun Kashmir Advisory Committee Prof. M.K. Teng said that Kashmiri Pandits became the prime target of terrorists and fundamentalist forces as they represented the continuation of 5000 year old Indian civilisation in Kashmir and front line resistance to plans of Islamic expansion.

He said that the Kashmiri Pandits do not figure even in the plans of central government policies as the state (government) of India is at war with its own civilisation. The government failed to recognize the ongoing terrorist movement as an onslaught on Indian civilisation.

President ASKPSC Sh. O.N. Trisal reiterated his full support to the Panun Kashmir's struggle for "Homeland" and described it as the only means to end the continuous persecution of the community at the hands of Pan Islamist forces. Mr Trisal condemned the objectionable statement of Legislative Assembly Member Mohammad Shafi Bhat in which he had said that Kashmiri Pandits have no stake in Kashmir. He said that our first stake in Kashmir is our 5000 year old civilisation and symbols of our civilisation like Shankaracharya, Kheerb-hawani, Amarnath that inspired Adi Guru Shanker Acharya and Swami Vivekananda to visit Kashmir. Mr Trisal described "Kashmir Sentinel" as the political voice of the Pandits and appealed the community brethren to support it.

In his address, Sh. Madhsudhan Bhat, PDP minority cell leader, expressed his support to Panun Kashmir struggle but added that we should not distance our selves from the government. He said that we are dependant on the government for our day to day problems and added that Mufti government was live to the problems of the community.

Ex-MLC and National Conference leader Mr Bushan Lal Bhat described January 19, 1990 as an unfortunate day in his life and held Pakistan responsible for fomenting terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir. He said that the situation is now changed and people have realised the ills of terrorism.

He warned the community to delink itself from the petty political games of Centre and hold dialogue with Muslims on their own.

Speaking on the occasion Sh M.L. Sopori of BJP minority cell said that in the interest of the community and nation we are ready to ignore even the party line. He referred to recent boycott call of elections by BJP minority cell against the party line as it was thought to being not in community's interest. He advised that in the rush for engineering, we should not ignore other fields.

Dr R.L. Bhat, a reputed columnist, in his address, said that there is unanimity among the community on the issue of creation of homeland but till that is achieved we cannot ignore day to day problems the community is faced with. He accused the community leadership for its failure to make the movement a "mass movement" as no efforts are made to involve the community at large scale.

Sh. Roshan Lal Raina , a member of Camp Development Committee, said that healing touch of Mufti government is aimed at the terrorists and this government is indifferent to the problems of the community. He added that community has rejected the return plan as it is aimed at "Divide and Rule".

Speaking on the occasion, Mr Bihari Lal Koul of Panun Kashmir cautioned the community of the plan initiated in the name of "reconciliation process," which is aimed at harming the interests and movement of the community. He referred to a recent conference organised at Asia Hotel by "Institute for Reconciliation", in this context.

In his concluding address, Panun Kashmir general secretary Sh. Kuldeep Raina said that we should not be pessimists and ignore the positive points of our efforts. He said that it is the result of community efforts that Kashmiri Pandits are today a prime party to Kashmir problem. Wherever in national or international fora, Kashmir is being discussed the Pandit factor prevails everywhere, he asserted. He said that we should not come to conclusions without going into the reality. He said that it was being debated in every corner that Mattan people have agreed to the return plan of Mufti Sayeed but in fact "Purohit Sabha Mattan", which is the elected and registered body, has rejected the return plan envisaged by the Mufti government. As such, we shall not generalise what is being done by individual vested interest.

He asserted that Panun Kashmir will oppose all those efforts tooth and nail that are aimed at dividing the community in the name of return or otherwise.

The programme was compered by Panun Kashmir coordinator. Sh. Satish Sher and two minutes silence was observed in memory of all those who sacrificed their lives for the cause of mother land during 14 years violence.

## 28 Kashmiri Pandits: obsessions with Grammar and History

### By A Pandit-Watcher

Asa community, Kashmiri Pandits are a race apart. They have suffered much historical persecution. This has affected their personality. Few traits remain peculiar to them. Among these are acerbic wit, humour and obsessions with grammar and history. There are interesting anecdotes on all these. Whenever Pandits do not agree, in disgust they remark '*Bata Khyav Gramrun*' (Pandit has obsession with grammar). There is an interesting story behind this. In 1931, during the turbulent days of the political upheaval, Pandit members of Yuvak Sabha had a lively correspondence with Mahatma Gandhi. These members 'detected' a grammatical mistake in one of the letters, written by the father of the nation. They went to Master Zind Koul, the renowned teacher, who had command over the English language, to confirm. He told them there was no mistake of grammar in Mahatma's letter. Still, these Pandits wrote to Gandhi that he had written incorrect grammar. He replied, "This letter is correct to the fitness of grammar". Since then Pandits often taunt one another : "*Bata Khyav Gramrun*".

The British Member of Parliament, Kaufmann was on a visit to camps of Pandit refugees in mid-nineties. He visited many camps to know at first hand the plight of Pandits in exile. Kaufmann was probably moved by their plight. It was in Purkhu camp, that he decided to inquire about the reasons which led to the ethnic-cleansing of Pandits. An articulate camp inmate volunteered to answer his query. May be, he had done his ground work well. Kaufmann, who had just an hour to spend in the camp, asked him to narrate what reasons forced the exodus. The camp inmate began his presentation by journeying back into medieval history. He elaborated on persecution of Pandits, during the times of Sikandar Butshikan in fourteenth century, for nearly forty minutes. Before he could come to the present exodus, Kaufmann shot the last question, "Did Sikander Butshikan belong to Hizbul Mujahideen". Journalists politicians and bureaucrats have often complained .. displaced Pandits have not been able to that put across their sufferings. One may wonder, whether lack of appreciation about Pandits' genocide by the powers that be, is partly due to Pandits' obsession with history.

The left politics, for various reasons, after mid-sixties failed to inspire Kashmiris. A friend, who was a fellow-traveller, found his own ingenious explanation to explain the apathy of Kashmiris towards Left politics. He argued that whenever he tried to take up the question of 'Land to the Tiller', people would scoff at him. They would tell him the proposition was irrational, and say "If land to the tiller, Why not food to the cook and cloth to the tailor". In 1990 this fellow traveller joined the other members of his community in exodus. He possesses superb-wit. That time Jammu was unaffected by terrorist violence. With all seriousness, this friend one day said, "ISI had made deep penetration into Jammu". When he was asked to explain, he said every item of hardware had ISI marking. He suggested ISI needed to be replaced by something more patriotic. Another acquaintance who had remained in thick of politics in early fifties narrated an interesting episode. During the Peace Conference campaigns, the local left held many rallies denouncing US imperialism. One of the rallies was held near the Jehlum bund, to sensitise Boatmen to dangers of US imperialism. The rally leaders warned boatmen that Americans would swarm soon into Kashmir. The boatmen evinced much interest. The leaders thought they had carried the day and probably the message had gone home. At the end of the meeting, one of the boatmen came forward and asked a leader, "when were the Americans likely to come. It is a good development and will boost our tourist business".

Late DP Dhar had built a strong reputation of being an avid reader. At the Bar, where he practised law he would boast of having read every latest arrival. His colleagues had a feeling that Dhar was not speaking facts. One day, they decided to puncture the lie. When he came to attend the Bar, they decided to lay a trap for him. They told him a new book had arrived. Its title was "*The King walks into the trap*". DP said he had read the book only the previous night. They, then told him there was no title like that. DP Dhar, the 'King' walked into the trap.

## 29 Old Kashmiris always yearned for Homeland

In 1903, when Maharaja Pratap Singh visited Delhi, he was presented an address printed on satin cloth by Kashmiri Pandits, resident in northern India. The address said that though they were living far from Kashmir, they had not forgotten that it was their homeland.

The pain of exile has been best expressed by the great poets of the exiled Kashmiri Pandit community.

*Brij Narain Chakbast wrote:*

*Shuteh Huveh Oos Bagh Ko*

*Guzarah Hai Zamana*

*Taza Hai Magar Iski Mohabbat Ka Fasana*

Ages have passed since this garden was abandoned, Yet the story of its love is still fresh.

*Bishan Narain Dar said :*

*Hai Arzuheh Dil Ki*

*Teri Arzu Karenh Jab Tak*

*Zaban Hai Teri Gupt Goo Karenh*

*Jo Hai Hazar Jan Se Tuj Per*

*Nisar Hai Gul Se Aziz Hum Ko Tera Khar Khar Hai*

*Mudat Seh Ishtiaq Hai*

*Ek Bar Dekh Leh Bulbul Meh Cheshm Shok Se Gulzar Dekh Leh*

It is the desire of my heart to be desirous of you.

As long as I can speak, to speak of you.

Whatever is most precious is offered to you.

To me every thorn of yours is dearer than a flower.

Since ages it is my wish to see you at least once.

It is the bird which longs to have a sight of the flower garden.

Tribhuvan Nath Sapru 'Hijr', referred to Kashmir as the Watan or Homeland of Kashmiri Pandit Community or Quam and said:

*Tailuk Vohi Quam Ko Hai Watan Se*

*Ki Jo Hai Ruh Ko Ho Tailuk Badan Se*

The relationship between the homeland and the nation.

It is the same as the relation between the body and the soul.

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*"The real problem of Kashmir is whether it continues as a secular state as the rest of India or not. This affects the whole of India because secularism in India also has not got such firm foundation as I would like it to have. Anything happening in Kashmir will undoubtedly affect the rest of India with its vast Muslim population".*

--Jawahar Lal Nehru, in his letter to Pt. Prem Nath Bazaz, dated 26th July 1962

### Letter written by Mahatma Gandhi to Pt. Prem Nath Bazaz, dated 15 May, 1934

*"Dear Friend*

*I have gone through your paper. We are sowing as we reaped. Seeing that Kashmir is predominantly Mussalman it is bound one day to become a Mussalman state. A Hindu prince can therefore only rule by*

*not ruling i.e., by allowing the Mussalmans to do as they like and by abdicating when they are manifestly going wrong. This is the ideal. What is expedient is more than I can judge.*

*Yours Faithfully*

*M.K. Gandhi*



# *Kashmir Sentinel*

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