

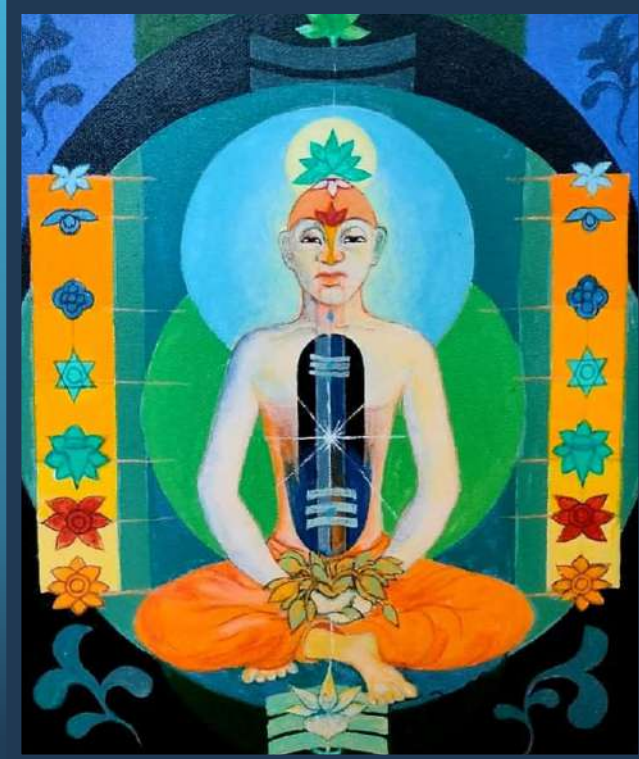
SPECIAL ISSUE 2026



Shuhul Taaph

शुहुल ताफ

شہل تاہ



॥ करणशक्तिः स्वतोनुभवात् ॥

Karanaśakth Svato'nubhavāt

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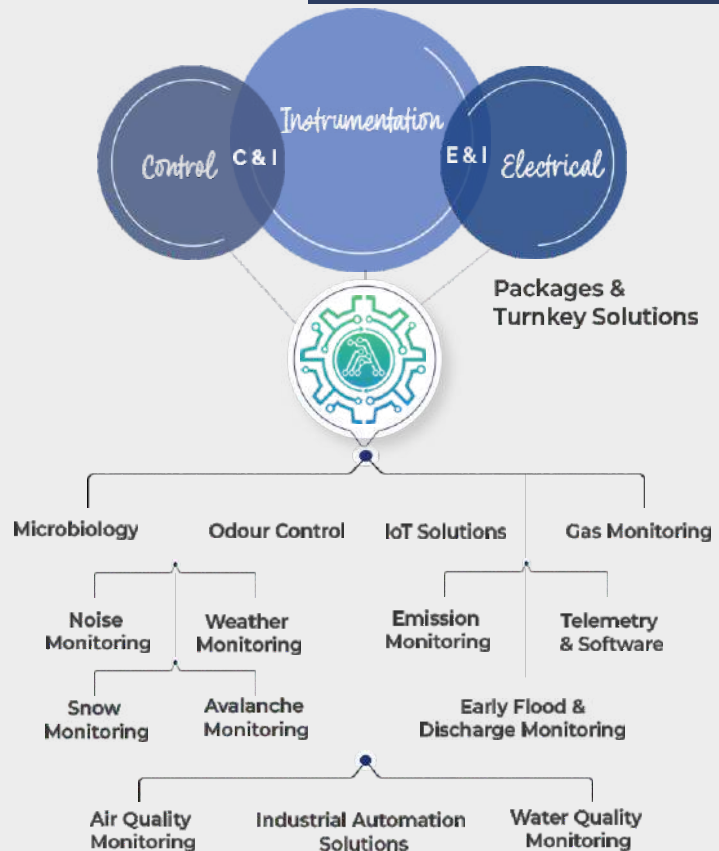


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Please send your valuable feedback/suggestions to kecssglobal@gmail.com

A TRIBUTE



Shri Ravinder Kumar Bhan

Shri R. K. Bhan was a seasoned professional who held leadership positions in reputed organizations including Hindalco, Star Steels, and the Apeejay Group. Known for his management acumen and community spirit, he served both as Secretary of KECSS From 2017 to 2020 & thereafter President of KECSS from 2021-2025, contributing significantly to their growth and effective administration. His leadership and dedication to community development remain widely appreciated.

Such people are rare and their passing brings the hard fact that God does not make many like them.

TEAM JMC

EDITORIAL

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE SCENARIO



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Artificial Intelligence is a buzz word in present day professional and social scenarios, and expectedly Kashmir Education Culture Science Society to keep up with the latest on its activity schedule organized two online lectures on the subjects. The first lecture was delivered by Shri Vinieth Kaul, a qualified engineer with a masters in computer software and artificial intelligence, who after completing his education and picking up due working experience in USA was driven by his entrepreneur passion to come back to India and start a company. His company develops products based on artificial intelligence for his clients. The other lecture was delivered by Dr Subash Kak, a distinguished Scholar and a scientist who has the expertise to the extent that the Honourable Prime Minister of India Shree Narendra Modi has selected him on the board of his advisors.

Both the distinguished speakers highlighted the use of artificial intelligence in the areas of both service sector and industrial sector. The development of an appropriate tool of artificial intelligence for a specific purpose gives a fast solution, quite fast than what manual exercises or what machine systems can do without the tool of artificial intelligence.

The system of working with the help of artificial intelligence to answer a question is simple. The tool of artificial intelligence simply analyses the whole range of the information available on the worldwide internet. And then by artificial intelligence tool the question is integrated with all the relatively relevant data on the worldwide net services for an answer based on the available knowledge data. This is done by artificial intelligence.

It was about four decades back, when, we a group of three friends were gossiping at my place in Sekidafar, Safa Kadal Srinagar enjoying Sheer Chai and Talvor. One of the friends was a masters in statistics and a degree in computer science. The other one was a doctor serving in Srinagar Medical College. Both the friends were more qualified and better placed than me. Seeing the two experts around, I put a question jointly to them. The question was, "Can we put the symptoms of an ill person on the computer and find a treatment prescription from the computer. The computer engineer did not say a concrete no, but the doctor was very emphatic to say it is very difficult because clinical examination of the patient and the clinical sense of a doctor are predominant factors in treating a patient.

There are areas where artificial intelligence will certainly do magical assessments and bring forth results that human endeavours need tremendous efforts. And the element of human error will be higher than the error in computing with the help of a proven durrfunctional artificial intelligence tool, e.g. in case of finding the results of analysing the symptoms and the effectiveness of drugs in public health situations like polio, malaria, tuberculosis, covid etc., and in other areas of clinical research and procedures artificial intelligence could give fast and accurate results. In every area of human endeavours, whether in peace or in war artificial intelligence has a role. Some sectors like service sectors, which are primarily data based, artificial intelligence is a boon.

Artificial intelligence is shaping to take a big role in languages scenarios. It is not too far a day when linguistic variations will narrow. General Translations for languages; from one language to another language will be available on the click of the mouse (already available in same). But sophistication and delicacy and spirit of a poem or a literary idiom are to be more often than not amiss in such translations.

Artificial intelligence will make transcribing of different languages a very simple and preliminary effort. But kashmiri in devnagri script will not be possible as on date, because there is no unicode for kashmiri in devnagri script. And the content body of Kashmiri in devnagri script is almost nonexistent on www Search engine. A hard effort in which I was also involved proved of little consequence in this regard. Regrettable- as a community, we have not been able to do this little effort----

I recollect a short story "The Dancing Partner" by Jerome K. Jerome, a British writer. The story has a dancing partner, a machine - a robot, which has a great variety in steps and music, and young people are fascinated to dance with this robotic dancing partner. The dancer has the control buttons to control the machine dancing partner. Once there was a mess up with the buttons during dancing and all went wrong for hazardous results: The dancing was a disaster

I wonder if it would be correct for me to say artificial intelligence is concrete knowledge - is it wisdom... Wisdom is compassion based and flexible?

Artificial Intelligence is created by human intelligence. What will happen if human intelligence becomes subordinate and dependent on artificial intelligence?

Stephen Hawking has said that artificial intelligence could be one of the factors for the end of the presentday earth.


Arvind Shah
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(Padma Shri Awardee – Sci & Eng - 2012)
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April 05, 2026
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WELCOME TO SHUHUL TAAPH-2026



Shuhul Taaph, over the years, has gained ground and popularity amongst the community members within the country and abroad. The function has become a platform to get together to celebrate our culture and heritage, and preserve it for posterity even after displacement from Kashmir. Most important is to feel rooted in an alien condition which has contributed to the identity crisis, due to the loss of our land and fading language, the marks of identity of any ethnic group.

We, as a community, are 'slotted' for an upward moment in careers, better livelihood, and comforts of life for the most, but are not 'sorted' for a larger cause of the community to safeguard our ethnic identity, an important component of socio-cultural disposition of a community. We have remained focused with ingrained survival skills, and huge endurance capacity under odds, not allowing ourselves to avenge the loss of our identity, hard earned heritage and fortunes of life. The latter has resulted in some to live under sub-optimal conditions and misery for very long with lost hopes of regaining their lost respect, dignity, and honour. Since we are peace-loving and apolitical, we only see KECSS as a beacon of hope to preserve what has been lost multiple times, a home away from home.

The future of the community, small in numbers to matter as a vote-bank or a dominant voice to steer situations to our advantage, lies in making a difference as individuals and groups and look for excellence in the fields we work in to provide a leadership role. We could occupy spaces of relevance, and become novel opportunity creators, apart from becoming a part of new knowledge generation system and its application to the society in diverse futuristic areas. Let us collectively work towards these goals.

I personally take this opportunity to congratulate the team of SHUHUL TAAPH-2026, the participants and the Awardees, and wish the current and future generation of the community to have, what we say in Kasmiri, KUNIYE KATH despite PANIN PANIN VATH, at least on issues of convergence which matter for our future survival and prosperity within the country.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "R. Bamezai".

Rameshwar Nath Koul Bamezai

THE Kashmiri Co-op. House-Building Society Ltd.

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Regd. No. F-917-(H) 321/AR/H

ARUN SHALIA
PRESIDENT
KASHMIRI CO-OPERATIVE HOUSE BUILDING SOCIETY

March 20, 2026



MESSAGE

I am happy that the Kashmir Education, Culture and Science Society (KECSS) is holding a Kashmiri Cultural festival ShuhulTaaph in the month of April 2026.

Such activities are a binding force for our community. As envisaged, ShuhulTaaph - 2026 shall provide a valuable opportunity for bringing together scientists, academicians, artists, thinkers, philosophers and others. The interactions and exchange between such personalities would make a useful contribution towards promoting and sustaining Kashmiri culture.

I wish the event all success and congratulate the Prof R.N.K Bamezai Chairman of the society and his team for organizing this Social, Scientific and Academic to joyful community festival.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'A. Shalia', written over a horizontal line.

ARUN SHALIA

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Kuldip Chogtu
Secretary
JMC (KCHBS & KECSS)

20 March, 2026



MESSAGE

It gives me immense pleasure that KECSS is organising the Cultural Extravaganza “Shuhul Taaph 2026 “ on 5th April 2026. Since 2009, KECSS has been celebrating Shuhul Taaph year after year with remarkable success, making it a cherished cultural tradition of our community.

Over the years, KECSS has played a commendable role in recognising and honouring distinguished personalities from our community for their outstanding contributions in the fields of education, science and technology, medical sciences, art and culture, entrepreneurship, public service, and other spheres of excellence.

I feel truly privileged and honoured to be associated with this prestigious Cultural Extravaganza. I extend my best wishes to the organisers and wish Shuhul Taaph 2026 a grand success.

A handwritten signature in purple ink, appearing to read 'Kuldip Chogtu', written in a cursive style.

Kuldip Chogtu
Secretary - JMC (KCHBS & KECSS)

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Kapil Kaul

General Secretary,

The Kashmir Education Culture & Science Society (Regd.)



MESSAGE

It gives me immense pleasure to pen down this message for our community, on behalf of K.E.C.S.S

“Culture grows when we share it—when its essence inspires others and becomes part of a bigger, connected community.”

Last year, we have embarked on several vibrant initiatives to celebrate and promote our rich Kashmiri culture. Shikara has already become a festival to look forward to each year. This year saw Shikara's 4th edition & drawing over 1500 enthusiastic attendees and growing in stature with every celebration. Equally inspiring, Shuhul Taaph recently marked its 15th glorious edition, a testament to its enduring legacy and community spirit. Alongside these, we have hosted engaging webinars featuring renowned Kashmiris from diverse fields, creating platforms for dialogue, learning, and pride in our heritage. We are also joining hands with other Kashmiri communities to collectively champion cultural promotion. Adding new categories to the KECSS Awards—such as Entrepreneurship, Young Sports Achievers, and Young Artists—has further energized our mission, ensuring our youth receive the recognition they deserve and encouraging them to shine as torchbearers of Kashmiri identity. In addition, we are proud to announce the introduction of new Prominent Personalities Memorial Awards, which will be formally disclosed at the upcoming Shuhul Taaph 16th edition, to be held on 5 April 2026. Together, these initiatives are not just events, but milestones in our journey of cultural revival and shared pride.

I urge our younger generations to take a little time out of their busy lives to dedicate towards our community. By doing so, we ensure that our culture and heritage are passed on with pride to the next generation. Do we want our future to grow up unaware of who we are? Getting involved in community activities is not only enjoyable, but it also brings immense satisfaction—knowing that you are helping shape a socially and culturally rich tomorrow.

Finally, wishing upcoming 16th edition of Shuhul Taaph which will be on 5th April 2026 a grand success.


Kapil Kaul
General Secretary

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संसद सदस्य
लोकसभा, नई दिल्ली



Member of Parliament
Lok Sabha, New Delhi



सुश्री बाँसुरी स्वराज
Ms. Bansuri Swaraj

MESSAGE

I am happy to know that Kashmir Education, Culture, and Science Society is publishing its newsletter on the occasion of 'Shuhul Taaph-2026'.

The culture, literature and arts of Kashmir have played a significant role in enriching India's civilizational heritage. They reflect a unique blend of tradition, creativity, and wisdom that connects us deeply with our roots while inspiring us to look towards the future with pride and confidence. The Kashmir Education, Culture, and Science Society has been making commendable efforts to preserve the Kashmiri language, folk music, traditions, and old culture practices, while also encouraging and nurturing budding artists within the community.

I extend my best wishes to the office bearers and all members of The Kashmir Education, Culture, and Science Society on this occasion.

Bansuri Swaraj

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Parvesh Sahib Singh
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Cabinet Minister Govt. of NCT of Delhi

D.O. No.: MIN/PWD/2051

Date.: 13.03.2026

MESSAGE

I am indeed glad to know that The Kashmir Education, Culture and Science Society (Regd.), New Delhi is going to celebrate its Annual Cultural and Award Function at KECSS Headquarters, B-36, Pamposh Enclave, New Delhi on 5th April 2026 and special issue of SHUHUL TAAPH-2026 is also going to be released on this occasion.

KECSS is playing a commendable role with the aim to promote the Culture, Language, Arts, Literature and Science of Kashmir through multitude of events such as, art exhibition, debates, cultural events, conferences and other community activities, involving youth, the future hope of the community and the country.

I appreciate the efforts of the Society and convey my best wishes for the grand success of this function.


(Parvesh Sahib Singh)

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ATAL DULLOO
IAS



Chief Secretary
Jammu & Kashmir

Message

It gives me immense pleasure to write this message for the special issue of 'Shuhul Taaph-2026, a magazine published by The Kashmir Education, Culture and Science Society (KECSS), New Delhi.

Our country at large, and Kashmir in particular, is known for its ancient sources of wisdom, cultural traditions and knowledge systems. Over a period spanning millennia, these traditions have flourished remarkably through productive interactions, scientific curiosity and imaginative exploration. The mystique of our beloved nation needs to be re-imagined by our younger generation to meaningfully comprehend the richness of the antique and diverse sources of our cultural, spiritual and scientific heritage.

It is heartening to know that KECSS has been doing a wonderful job towards realizing this end, involving youth in the noble cause of preservation and propagation of our age-old heritage, culture, knowledge systems, educational traditions and other allied fields.

KECSS promotes the spirit of Kashmiri culture as an integral part of the civilizational ethos of our country through a diverse array of events. These events include art exhibitions, debates, cultural events, conferences, and other community-based activities, showcasing our cultural, educational and scientific heritage, while involving youth and other conscious segments of our society.

Equally elating is the fact that this organization has been honoring eminent Kashmiri personalities in the fields of culture, education, science, medicine, technology, arts, public service, etc. by conferring on them KECSS annual awards, instituted in the name of outstanding personalities with exceptional contributions in the cause of nation building.

The special issue of 'Shuhul Taaph - 2026', carrying valuable literary contributions from persons of renown in diverse fields, is expected to reaffirm the substantial contribution of our cultural icons and literary giants while shedding light on the unexplored dimensions of their work.

Such publications will play a vital role in educating our budding generation about our cultural richness and scientific heritage. They are indeed a great tribute to our cultural wealth and also exhibit our collective commitment to keep it alive against all odds.

All efforts need to be made to not only preserve and promote these traditions but also to nurture them.

My best wishes are with KECSS in all their noble endeavours.

(Atal Dulloo)

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February 16, 2026

MESSAGE

I am happy to know that The Kashmir Education, Culture and Science Society is bringing out a souvenir. I understand that Kashmir Education, Culture & Science Society (KECSS) has been organizing such activities for a long time by promoting the art, culture, language and literature.

I just wanted to take a moment to express my genuine appreciation for the organization and the incredible work being done. The level of coordination, professionalism, and dedication is truly inspiring. It's evident that a lot of thought and care goes into everything, and it makes a real difference.

Thank you for setting such a high standard and for creating an environment where excellence thrives.

Shikha Roy

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**K. Mahesh
IAS**



*Secretary
Art, Culture & Language
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MESSAGE

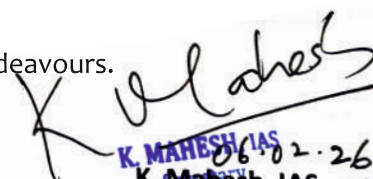
I am pleased to learn that *The Kashmir Education, Culture and Science Society (KECSS), New Delhi* is bringing out the special issue of its magazine “**SHUHUL TAAPH-2026**” on the occasion of its annual cultural and award function.

KECSS has been making valuable contributions towards the promotion of education, culture, language, arts, literature, and scientific thought, while preserving the rich and pluralistic heritage of Kashmir. Its initiatives provide an important platform for academicians, professionals, artists, thinkers, and youth to engage constructively and contribute to social and national development.

SHUHUL TAAPH reflects the intellectual vitality and creative expression of the Kashmiri community and serves as a meaningful medium for dialogue between tradition and modernity. Such efforts play a vital role in strengthening cultural harmony, nurturing scientific temper, and inspiring the younger generation to uphold the values of knowledge, innovation, and social responsibility.

I commend the office bearers, editors, and contributors of KECSS for their dedicated efforts. I am confident that **SHUHUL TAAPH – 2026** will be well received by readers and will further reinforce the Society’s mission of promoting education, culture, science, and technology.

I extend my best wishes to KECSS for continued success in all its endeavours.


K. MAHESH IAS
06.02.26
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Govt. of NCT of Delhi
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MESSAGE FOR SHUHUL TAAPH 2026

It is a privilege to extend my warmest commendations to the Kashmir Education, Culture and Science Society for the invaluable work you continue to do in safeguarding and celebrating our shared Kashmiri heritage.

As the pages of Shuhul Taaph open once more in 2026, they carry forward a quiet yet resolute light that has long illuminated the path of our collective heritage. I commend the Society with deep admiration for its unwavering commitment to nurturing education, preserving culture, and advancing scientific temper among Kashmiris near and far. In every edition of this magazine, you weave together threads of memory, creativity, and forward-looking vision, ensuring that the essence of Kashmiriyat remains vibrant and accessible. Your work is a testament to love for the homeland, a labour that sustains identity amid changing times.

In this digital age, our beloved Kashmiri language, Koshur, faces both peril and promise. Spoken with warmth in homes across the Valley and in distant lands by a devoted yet relatively small community, it contends with the overwhelming presence of global tongues that dominate screens, algorithms, and everyday discourse. Young minds, especially in urban centres and the diaspora, often drift toward languages that promise greater utility in education and employment, leaving Koshur confined to intimate conversations rather than public life. Yet this very challenge awakens an opportunity for renewal. The language that has carried the wisdom of Lal Ded, Nund Reshi and Ahad Zargar, and countless folk narrators through centuries need not fade; it can evolve and thrive if we embrace the tools of our era with intention and pride.

Digitisation stands as the first vital step. By scanning ancient manuscripts, building



सूचना का
अधिकार

Room No. 109 G.F., Vigyan Bhawan Annexe, New Delhi-110 011
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comprehensive online archives, and developing reliable Kashmiri fonts and keyboards that support Perso-Arabic, Devanagari, and Sharada scripts alike, we make our classical literature instantly reachable to anyone with a device. Sharada is particularly important as there are very few people today who understand this script. E-books, digital dictionaries, and searchable repositories of poetry, prose, and oral histories transform scattered treasures into living resources. Social platforms, podcasts, and short videos in authentic Koshur can draw younger audiences back, turning passive scrolling into active participation and creation.

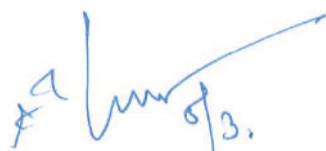
Artificial intelligence emerges as a powerful companion in this endeavour. With careful curation of high-quality Kashmiri datasets, AI can power translation services that introduce our Sufi verses and folk tales to global readers, speech-to-text systems that capture elders' stories before they are lost, and generative tools that aid new writers in crafting contemporary works while honouring traditional rhythms and idioms. Voice assistants, educational apps, and localised content become possible when language models respect the unique phonetics and cultural nuances of Koshur. These technologies do not replace human effort but amplify it, helping a smaller linguistic community leap forward in visibility and vitality.

To keep Koshur truly alive, we must foster pride and practicality together. Schools and colleges can integrate it as a medium for creative expression and instruction where feasible. New literature, fresh translations, and digital storytelling deserve celebration through awards and online gatherings. The diaspora holds special potential, as those living afar create memes, reels, songs, and games in their mother tongue, weaving bonds across distances. Partnerships with linguists, technologists, and developers can localise apps, keyboards, and voice interfaces. Above all, every conversation in Koshur becomes an act of continuity, reminding the young that speaking it is not mere nostalgia but a bold assertion of belonging to a rich, enduring civilisation.

Shuhul Taaph has long championed these very ideas, giving space to discussions on preservation, innovation, and youth engagement. In dedicating thought to the digital future of our language, you do more than document our story; you help author its next inspiring chapter.

May the 2026 edition shine even more brightly, inspiring fresh creativity and deeper commitment. May Koshur flourish in every pixel and every spoken word, enduring for generations yet to come.

With profound respect and shared hope for our language and culture,



Shah Faesal
Deputy Secretary (Museums)
Ministry of Culture
Government of India

The Kashmir Education, Culture and Science Society (Regd.)

B-36, Pamposh Enclave, New Delhi - 110 048

Phone: 011-26418853

Email: info@kecss.org, kecssglobal@yahoo.com

Website : kecss.org

ANJUM MANDAL

Municipal Councillor

Municipal Corporation of Delhi



No. : MCD/GK/101

Delhi : MCD/GK/101

Date : 24/02/2026

MESSAGE

It is a matter of great pleasure to know that the Kashmir Education, Culture and Science Society (KECSS), New Delhi is bringing out the special issue of SHUHUL TAAPH-2026. Your continued commitment towards promoting the rich heritage of Kashmiri culture, language, arts, literature and scientific temperament is truly commendable.

Through its various cultural, educational, and community initiatives, KECSS has played a meaningful role in preserving and celebrating the vibrant traditions of Kashmir while also encouraging the youth to stay connected with their roots. Such efforts contribute significantly towards fostering cultural harmony and intellectual growth within society.

I extend my heartfelt best wishes for the successful publication of the magazine and for the continued success of your endeavors. May KECSS keep inspiring generations and strengthening the spirit of culture, education and community service.

Regards,

Smt. Anjum Mandal
Municipal Councillor
Greater Kailash Ward 173

Mob.: 7042402556 | Email : officeofanjummandal@gmail.com

Correspondence Address: K 37A, First Floor, Kailash Colony, New Delhi -110048

The Kashmir Education, Culture and Science Society (Regd.)

B-36, Pamposh Enclave, New Delhi - 110 048

Phone: 011-26418853

Email: info@kecss.org, kecssglobal@yahoo.com

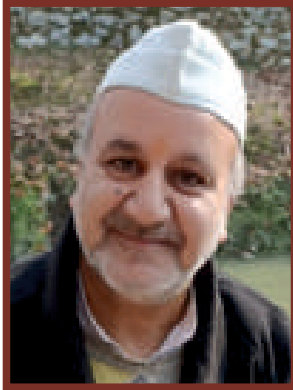
Website : kecss.org

Ravinder Pandita
(President-AIKS)

ALL INDIA KASHMIRI SAMAJ (REGD.)

(APEX BODY OF INDIAN & OVERSEAS KASHMIRI PANDIT ORGANISATIONS)

Web: www.aiks.org; E-mail: hqaiks@gmail.com



MESSAGE

At the outset Seasons greetings and Happy Gregorian New year 2026. It is a matter of pride that KECSS is organizing annual Shuhul Taaph event one more time at Pamposh Enclave , New Delhi. This celebration in exile reflects the resilience and never die attitude of the community, who are away from motherland since last 37 years due to genocide of 1990 in the valley. It was in this context that leaders & well wishers of community thought of preserving the indigenous culture of Kashmiri pandits. To promote the same, series of activities were planned to nurture the talent and support the creative minds.

Preservation of Culture & Heritage is the need of the hour. KECSS has done yeoman's service to make efforts to preserve & promote the Kashmiri culture & heritage in various ways. Though other organizations like JKVM, Pambach, AIKS & Ors have also put in their efforts in this regard, but Shuhul Taaph makes it special in many ways. Therefore I would like to express my gratitude to all KECSS members both past & present who have worked tirelessly for the community. KECSS have fostered unique bond among the displaced community who are living around Delhi NCR, as they have made the organization as hub of cultural activities. Such initiatives are very important as it encourages the community people especially youngsters to know each other and promote their ideas.

I request the community and organizers to hold such events more and more in near future which would help writers, poets, authors & artists to exchange ideas and share their experiences. International Mother tongue day by CLKCC & AIKS is a way forward in this regard and Shuhul Taaph as its backend.

Once again, I thank KECSS for this initiative and wish them great success. A Happy Shivratri to all. May Sharda Bless us all.



RavinderPandita

The Kashmir Education, Culture and Science Society (Regd.)

B-36, Pamposh Enclave, New Delhi - 110 048

Phone: 011-26418853

Email: info@kecss.org, kecsglobal@yahoo.com

Website : kecss.org

Rajinder Premi

Co-Chief Editor &
Sr. Vice president AIKS.



ALL INDIA KASHMIRI SAMAJ (REGD.)

(APEX BODY OF INDIAN & OVERSEAS KASHMIRI PANDIT ORGANISATIONS)
Web: www.aiks.org; E-mail: hqaiks@gmail.com

MESSAGE

I am honored to share that I have been actively associated with KECSS for the past two decades, and it's been a privilege to be part of an organization that has grown to become a beacon of Kashmiri culture. KECSS has worked tirelessly to preserve and promote our rich cultural heritage, and I'm proud to say that our efforts have been recognized. Through literary festivals, art exhibitions, seminars, and symposiums, we continue to engage our community and showcase the best of Kashmiri talent.

As Co-Chief Editor of ShuhulTaph magazine, I am delighted to present our latest edition, which features outstanding contributions from renowned authors and writers. I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to all our contributors for their valuable inputs and invite our readers to share their thoughts and feedback with us, helping us to grow and improve.

I hope you enjoy reading the latest edition of ShuhulTaph, and I look forward to your continued support.

Rajinder Premi



The Kashmir Education, Culture and Science Society (Regd.)

New Delhi

The Kashmir Education, Culture and Science Society
is pleased to confer the

KECSS Life Time Achievement Award-2026

to

Prof. Roop Krishen Khar

*For his Outstanding Contribution in the field of
Pharmaceutical Science*



Prof. Roop Krishen Khar is a titan of Pharmaceutical Sciences, whose career spanning over six decades embodies the pinnacle of academic excellence, pioneering research, and visionary leadership.

A University Gold Medalist and Indo-Bulgarian Ph.D. Fellow, Prof. Khar began his journey in the inaugural batch of DPSRU in 1964, setting a standard of excellence that would define his entire trajectory. For over 35 years, he served Jamia Hamdard, New Delhi, with distinction as Dean and Head, shaping the institution's academic and administrative foundations. His leadership continued as Director of the Anangpuria Group of Institutions and persists today in his role as Professor Emeritus and Advisor.

A global authority in drug delivery, his prolific scholarly output includes over 400 peer-reviewed papers, 17 patents, and 14 influential textbooks that remain cornerstones for pharmacy students across the nation.

Beyond his scientific rigor, which includes the mentorship of 90 Ph.D. scholars, Prof. Khar is a man of profound service. Whether chairing the Good Society of Clinical Research or serving the Kashmiri Sevak Samaj, his contributions extend to the very heart of the community. A practitioner of Yoga and the Art of Living for over two decades, he seamlessly integrates spiritual mindfulness with professional ethics.

In recognition of a legacy cemented by Lifetime Achievement Awards from the IPA and APTI, we honor Prof. Khar for his peerless dedication to science, his integrity as a mentor, and his transformative impact on the global pharmaceutical landscape.

*The Kashmir Education, Culture & Science Society feels proud to present the
KECSS Life Time Achievement Award to Prof. Roop Krishen Khar for his
Outstanding Contribution in the field of Pharmaceutical Science*

Prof. R.N.K Bamezai
Chairman JMC &
President KECSS

Arun Shaila
President
KCHBS

Kapil Kaul
Gen. Secretary
KECSS



New Delhi, 5 April, 2026



The Kashmir Education, Culture and Science Society (Regd.)

New Delhi

The Kashmir Education, Culture and Science Society
is pleased to confer the

KECSS Distinguished Award-2026

to

Shri BRIJ LAL BHAT (PADMA SHRI AWARDEE)

*For his Lifelong Service and Contribution to
Social Welfare and Community Harmony*



Shri Brij Lal Bhat is a first-class first postgraduate in Horticulture with specialized training in Marketing & Refrigeration from Washington State University, USA. During his government service in Jammu & Kashmir's Agri-Horticulture sector, he held key positions including Project Director, Agri Export Zones; Chief Executive Officer of World Bank-aided Indo-Australian/Italian Projects; and Director of Horticulture Planning & Marketing, J&K. He significantly strengthened the fruit industry across research, production, and post-production value addition. His initiatives included mass awareness on soil and water conservation, leading export delegations to SAARC countries, introducing eco-friendly cardboard packaging, establishing cold chain systems, and developing main and satellite fruit and vegetable markets. He also helped secure Agri Export Zone status for apples and walnuts and promoted high-density plantations through the introduction of clonal rootstocks and scientific orchard management.

In his post-retirement "Pay Back Stage," he serves as Chairman of Shri Ramakrishna Mahasammelan Ashram – Vivekananda Kendra (SRMA-VK), Nagdandi, Anantnag. Guided by Swami Vivekananda's vision of "Man Making & Nation Building," he promotes cultural revival, interfaith harmony, and national integration from Kashmir to Kanyakumari. He established working units (Karyasthan) across Kashmir to engage youth in yoga and value-based Kendra, Swadhiyay, Yog & Sanaskar Vargactivities. He also developed high-density apple and walnut demonstration orchards to promote scientific farming, efficient water use, and rural self-reliance. Under his leadership, the Ashram expanded infrastructure and secured ₹ 8.85 crore for heritage development, enhancing capacity and boosting religious & adventure tourism. He has received multiple state and national awards for his distinguished service.

*The Kashmir Education, Culture & Science Society feels proud to present the
KECSS Life Time Achievement Award to Shri Brij Lal Bhat for his Lifelong Service
and Contribution to Social Welfare and Community Harmony*

Prof. R.N.K Bamezai
Chairman JMC &
President KECSS

Arun Shaila
President
KCHBS

Kapil Kaul
Gen. Secretary
KECSS



New Delhi, 5 April, 2026



The Kashmir Education, Culture and Science Society (Regd.)

New Delhi

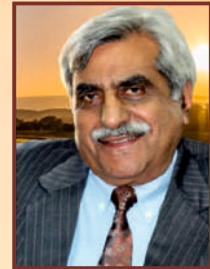
The Kashmir Education, Culture and Science Society
is pleased to confer the

KECSS MK KAW MEMORIAL Award-2026

to

Prof. B. L. Zutshi

*For his Excellence in Academic and
Intellectual Discourse*



Prof. B. L. Zutshi, a man of many parts with a larger than life outlook, who fought challenges of life and won. A zealous academician and teacher par excellence, he has consistently reached out to the suffering, becoming a voice for the voiceless. Guided by intellectual brilliance and deeply rooted moral values, he firmly believes that while the end may be important, the means are sacred — values being his most treasured possession.

His profound commitment to the downtrodden and the displaced community during the turbulent 1990s reflects his lifelong dedication to justice and human dignity, making him a proud Kashmiri Pandit in both spirit and action. For over five decades, he has served as an educator, mentor, and administrator, strengthening institutions through transparent governance and visionary leadership.

The establishment of Camp Colleges in 1990 to nurture displaced students into responsible citizens and competent professionals stands as a landmark achievement. He fought relentlessly for the survival of teachers, employees, and students — resisting educational injustice, challenging arbitrary academic extensions, and opposing denial of salaries to migrant private teachers. For eighteen years, he ensured tax protection for displaced State Government employees, an extra ordinary accomplishment under stringent tax laws.

As President of the historic Hindu Education Society, founded in 1943, he led the determined revival of G. M. College despite government apathy. Today, the institution stands rejuvenated with modern infrastructure and renewed promise, poised to usher in a new chapter of excellence.

*The Kashmir Education, Culture & Science Society feels proud to present the
KECSS MK KAW Memorial Award to Prof. B. L. Zutshi for
his Excellence in Academic and Intellectual Discourse*

Prof. R.N.K Bamezai
Chairman JMC &
President KECSS

Arun Shaila
President
KCHBS

Kapil Kaul
Gen. Secretary
KECSS



New Delhi, 5 April, 2026



The Kashmir Education, Culture and Science Society (Regd.)

New Delhi

The Kashmir Education, Culture and Science Society
is pleased to confer the

KECSS BB DHAR MEMORIAL AWARD-2026

to

Dr. Upender Kaul

For his outstanding contributions to
Healthcare and Medical Science



Prof Upendra Kaul is a Cardiologist born in Kashmir. He is currently Chairman and Dean Academics and Clinical Research, Batra Hospital and Medical Research Centre, New Delhi.

He is known for starting the coronary angioplasty program in India. He has been on the faculty of G B Pant Hospital, PGIMER Chandigarh and AIIMS, New Delhi where he was a professor of cardiology. He is the Founder Director of Gauri Kaul Foundation, a nonprofit NGO with a mission of "No Heart Attacks". Through this NGO he has established Tele Cardiology units in remote areas of Jammu and Kashmir, and day care heart centers "Gauri Heart Centre, Srinagar and Prasad Joo Khan Heart Centre, in village Hawal, Pulwama and a "Cardiac Clinics on wheels for remote areas of South Kashmir.

Prof Kaul has trained more than 400 cardiologists and has more than 400 publications and has authored many books including his memoirs "When the Heart Speaks". He has held the posts of President of "Cardiological Society of India" and SAARC Cardiac Society. He is also a founder member of the Asia Pacific Society of Interventional Cardiology and Interventional Cardiology Foundation of India. Currently he is the Editor in Chief of the Journal ASIA INTERVENTIONS and Joint editor of EURO INTERVENTION. For his contributions Prof Kaul has been awarded several awards which include Life Time Achievement award of the Indian Society of Clinical Research, the Padma Shri and Dr B C Roy Awards by the President of India.

*The Kashmir Education, Culture & Science Society feels proud to present the
KECSS BB Dhar Memorial Award to Dr. Upender Kaul for his outstanding
contributions to Healthcare and Medical Science*

Prof. R.N.K Bamezai
Chairman JMC &
President KECSS

Arun Shaila
President
KCHBS

Kapil Kaul
Gen. Secretary
KECSS



New Delhi, 5 April, 2026



The Kashmir Education, Culture and Science Society (Regd.)

New Delhi

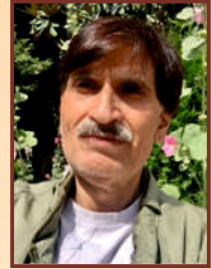
The Kashmir Education, Culture and Science Society
is pleased to confer the

KECSS HARI KRISHAN KAUL MEMORIAL AWARD -2026

to

Dr. Sohan Kaul

For his outstanding contributions to
Contemporary Kashmiri Writing



Dr. Sohan Kaul (Born 17 June 1955, Parnewah, Budgam) stands among the most distinguished figures of modern Kashmiri literature—a novelist, playwright, short story writer, critic, translator, actor, and public broadcaster whose work reshaped the creative landscape of the Kashmiri language. After receiving his early education in his native village and matriculating from Khanshab High School, he graduated from Amar Singh College, Srinagar, where he became actively involved in the theatre movement. In 1973 he joined the Department of Urdu at University of Kashmir, earning his M.A. and later a PhD (1982) for his research on social satire in Urdu prose.

In 1982 he joined Doordarshan as Assistant Programme Officer, producing hundreds of cultural programmes, documentaries, and socially committed films, including a landmark film on free legal aid for the Jammu and Kashmir High Court. Promoted as Programme Officer in 2002, he served with distinction until his retirement in 2015, contributing significantly to public service broadcasting and cultural dissemination.

Initially writing in Urdu, he later shifted to Kashmiri to capture the idiomatic richness of his mother tongue. His major publications include the acclaimed novels *Ded*, *Psychiatric Ward*, *Wahshi Kath*, *Talash Roze Jari*, *Wunal*, *Panien Panien Gunah*, *Abysmal*, and the flood-inspired allegory *Yotam Saier Paethi Gow*, along with numerous other works exploring existential anxiety, faith, social conflict, and the absurdity of life. His plays—collected in volumes such as *Naad*, *Shakespeare*, *Khar Kale*, *Yousuf Shahi Chak*, and *Gindan Tamashe*—introduced a new theatrical idiom and brought Kashmiri drama to wider recognition. As a translator, he rendered major world dramas into Kashmiri, enriching regional theatre traditions.

He also wrote widely appreciated short stories published in leading literary journals, including the *Akademi* magazine *Sheeraza*. Honoured with the *Sangeet Natak Akademi Award*, *Sahitya Akademi Award*, and several prestigious memorial awards, Dr. Kaul's contributions to literature, theatre, and civil society remain pioneering, establishing him as a central voice articulating the cultural memory and philosophical anxieties of Kashmir.

*The Kashmir Education, Culture & Science Society feels proud to present the
KECSS Hari Krishan Kaul Memorial Award to Dr. Sohan Kaul for his outstanding
contributions to Contemporary Kashmiri Writing*

Prof. R.N.K Bamezai
Chairman JMC &
President KECSS

Arun Shaila
President
KCHBS

Kapil Kaul
Gen. Secretary
KECSS



New Delhi, 5 April, 2026



The Kashmir Education, Culture and Science Society (Regd.)

New Delhi

The Kashmir Education, Culture and Science Society
is pleased to confer the

KECSS SARWANAND KAUL PREMI MEMORIAL AWARD -2026

to

Maj. Gen. Sunil Kumar Razdan KC VSM (Retd)

*For his outstanding contributions in the field of
Bravery & Distinguished Service*



Maj. Gen. SK Razdan, KC VSM is a Kashmiri Pandit, born in 1954 in Meghalaya and raised in Mathura, UP, by his Kashmiri parents, who migrated from Kashmir in 1962.

After earning his Post Graduation in Mathematics, he was commissioned into the elite Parachute Regiment in 1977.

His early career was marked by high-altitude mountaineering—scaling Kinner Kailash — and leading his regiment's sharpshooters to win the Chetwode Cup. A two-time recipient of the Chief Of the Army Staff (COAS) Commendation, his valor reached a pinnacle in October 1994, when he led a high-stakes rescue operation of women held by militants in J&K despite bullet injury to his spine.

In 1995, life took a dramatic turn when he became paralyzed below the waist due to the damages sustained to his spine. In 1996 he was Awarded the Kirti Chakra, India's second-highest peacetime gallantry award, for his bravery displayed during the 16-hour operation in Damal Kunzipur, Kashmir, where he rescued 14 women.

Refusing to let physical limitations define him, he transitioned into research at DRDO, where he earned multiple Director's Awards for his work in Laser technology. He further distinguished himself by reclaiming 125 acres of encroached land for the Ministry of Defence. Promoted to Brigadier in 2006 and later to Major General, he was honored with the Vishisht Seva Medal (VSM) by the President of India. Today, his legacy continues through his sons: Ishan, serving in the Special Forces, and Paarth, a doctor.

He became the first officer in the Indian Army to rise to the rank of Major General while being wheelchair-bound. He superannuated in 2012, leaving behind a profound blueprint of grit and duty.

*The Kashmir Education, Culture & Science Society feels proud to present the
KECSS Sarwanand Kaul Premi Memorial Award to Major General Sunil Kumar Razdan,
KC, VSM (Retd) for his outstanding contributions in the field of Bravery & Distinguished Service*

Prof. R.N.K Bamezai
Chairman JMC &
President KECSS

Arun Shaila
President
KCHBS

Kapil Kaul
Gen. Secretary
KECSS



New Delhi, 5 April, 2026



The Kashmir Education, Culture and Science Society (Regd.)

New Delhi

The Kashmir Education, Culture and Science Society
is pleased to confer the

KECSS AMAR NATH VAISHNAVI MEMORIAL AWARD -2026

to

Shri Gauri Shankar Raina

*For his outstanding contributions in the field of
Distinguished Service in Social Activity Literature & Arts*



Gauri Shankar Raina is a distinguished Indian writer, playwright, translator, and media professional known for his significant contributions to Kashmiri and Hindi literature. Through his creative writings, translations, and cultural programming, he has played an important role in bringing Kashmiri literary sensibilities to a wider Hindi readership, thereby strengthening the dialogue between regional and national literary traditions.

His academic journey culminated in a doctoral degree, which deepened his engagement with language, culture, and narrative forms. This scholarly foundation later transformed both his literary and media work, enabling him to approach storytelling with intellectual depth and cultural sensitivity.

Apart from writing, Dr Raina has had a notable career in broadcasting and television production. He worked extensively with Doordarshan and served in leadership roles as Controller of Media Centre at the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, where he contributed to documenting and promoting India's diverse artistic traditions through audio-visual projects.

His work has earned him critical acclaim and prestigious honors. Among these, the Sahitya Akademi Award for the Hindi translation of selected Kashmiri short stories stands out as recognition of his outstanding contribution to Literature. He is also the recipient of 'Souharda Samman' and JELK Academy Award. And for contribution to Media he has been honored with the 'Public Service Broadcasting Award' by Govt. of India and Hindi Journalism Award by the International Chamber of Media & Industry.

Dr. Raina's legacy stands as a testament to the transformative potential of literature in fostering cultural unity while honoring linguistic diversity.

*The Kashmir Education, Culture & Science Society feels proud to present the
KECSS Amar Nath Vaishnavi Memorial Achievement Award to Shri Gauri Shankar Raina for his outstanding
contributions in the field of Distinguished Service in Social Activity Literature & Arts*

Prof. R.N.K Bamezai
Chairman JMC &
President KECSS

Arun Shaila
President
KCHBS

Kapil Kaul
Gen. Secretary
KECSS



New Delhi, 5 April, 2026



The Kashmir Education, Culture and Science Society (Regd.)

New Delhi

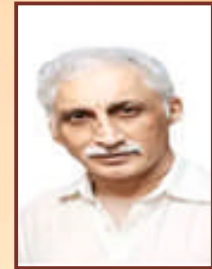
The Kashmir Education, Culture and Science Society
is pleased to confer the

KECSS Distinguished Award-2026

to

Dr. Shailesh Raina

*For his outstanding contributions in the field of
Medicine*



Dr. Shailesh Raina, an alumnus of the Armed Forces Medical College (AFMC), Pune, is a distinguished Urologist with over 35 years of experience. After completing his post-graduation in General Surgery, he pursued specialized training in Mumbai and London. Currently, he serves as the Director of Urology and Renal Transplantation and Coordinator of Robotics at Jaslok Hospital, Mumbai, while holding visiting positions at Lilavati, Breach Candy, and Sir H. N. Reliance Foundation Hospitals.

A pioneer in his field, Dr. Raina established Neurourology as a subspecialty at Jaslok Hospital and was instrumental in setting up its Pelvic Floor Clinic. He is one of the few surgeons in India to perform artificial sphincter surgery and introduced Sacral Neuromodulation for hypotonic bladders to the country in 2010. His expertise in Robotic Surgery was honed at prestigious institutes in Belgium and France.

Beyond clinical practice, Dr. Raina is a dedicated educator and leader. He serves on the Clinical Advisory Board of IIT Kanpur and is the President of the Pelvic Floor Society. Driven by a philosophy of "giving back," he has made profound contributions to the Kashmiri community. Following the 2014 floods, he led efforts to repair the G.B. Pant Children's Hospital and established the Renal Transplantation Programmes at Government Medical Colleges in Srinagar and Jammu, performing over 30 pro bono transplants.

Guided by the values of Swami Vivekananda and Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam, Dr. Raina has treated patients across all socioeconomic strata with unwavering ethics.

*The Kashmir Education, Culture & Science Society feels proud to present the
KECSS Distinguished Award to Dr. Shailesh Raina
for his outstanding contributions in the field of Medicine*

Prof. R.N.K Bamezai
Chairman JMC &
President KECSS

Arun Shaila
President
KCHBS

Kapil Kaul
Gen. Secretary
KECSS



New Delhi, 5 April, 2026



The Kashmir Education, Culture and Science Society (Regd.)

New Delhi

The Kashmir Education, Culture and Science Society
is pleased to confer the

KECSS Distinguished Award-2026

to

Prof. Shonaleeka Kaul

*For her outstanding contributions in the field of
Education*



Prof. Shonaleeka Kaul is India's leading cultural and intellectual historian, specialising in Sanskrit literature. She is Professor, Centre for Historical Studies, JNU, and has also been the Malathy Singh Distinguished Lecturer in South Asian Studies at Yale University (USA), the Jan Gonda Fellow in Indology at Leiden University (The Netherlands), and Visiting Professor of History at Heidelberg University (Germany).

*Kaul is a prolific and path-breaking author. She has published 9 internationally acclaimed books so far, demolishing entrenched colonial fallacies about India and offering a rigorous, new and culture-sensitive understanding of it. These books include her celebrated works on Kashmiri history such as *The Making of Early Kashmir: Landscape and Identity in the Rajatarangini* (2018), *Looking Within: Life Lessons from Lal Ded* (2019), and *Bharata Before the British and Other Essays: Towards a New Indology* (2024).*

*Other books representing the breadth of her research repertoire are *Imagining the Urban: Sanskrit and the City in Early India* (2010), *Eloquent Spaces: Meaning and Community in Early Indian Architecture* (2019), *Retelling Time: Alternative Temporalities from Premodern South Asia* (2021), *Hitopadesha: A New Translation* (2022) and *Myths and Places: New Perspectives in Indian Cultural Geography* (2023).*

She has been invited to speak widely around the world including at Sorbonne (Paris), Sapienza (Rome), Stanford, Yale, and Michigan, Freie University (Berlin), Witwatersrand (Johannesburg), Australian National University (Canberra), University of Kent and Liverpool, University of Warsaw and Sophia, World Sanskrit Conference (Bangkok and Canberra), and United Nations (Geneva).

Within India, she has delivered numerous keynotes and public lectures including at National Museum; Prime Ministers' Memorial Museum and Library, Teenmurti; Indian Institute of Advanced Studies, Shimla; Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration, Mussoorie; India International Centre; various IITs and so on. She also recently curated a first of its kind national exhibition on 'Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh Through the Ages' for the Indian Council of Historical Research, Ministry of Education.

She writes regularly for the New Indian Express, Frontline, Open, etc and has been featured multiple times on Doordarshan and Epic TV.

*The Kashmir Education, Culture & Science Society feels proud to present the
KECSS Distinguished Award to Prof. Shonaleeka Kaul
for her outstanding contributions in the field of Education*

Prof. R.N.K Bamezai
Chairman JMC &
President KECSS

Arun Shaila
President
KCHBS

Kapil Kaul
Gen. Secretary
KECSS



New Delhi, 5 April, 2026



The Kashmir Education, Culture and Science Society (Regd.)

New Delhi

The Kashmir Education, Culture and Science Society
is pleased to confer the

KECSS Distinguished Award-2026

to

Dr. Anil Kaul

*For his outstanding contributions in the field of
Science & Research*



A physician-dentist-scientist and public health professional with over 35 years of experience in academic medicine, global health, and translational research, with special focus on emerging/re-emerging Infectious Diseases. Dr. Kaul holds degrees in Medicine from Madras Medical College, Dentistry from King George's Medical College, and Public Health Administration from University of Minnesota.

Between 1991 and 2024, Dr. Kaul served at various US Institutions including University of Texas, University of Minnesota and recently at Oklahoma State University where he was Clinical Professor and Program Director for Global Health, established/directed High-Complexity Infectious Diseases Laboratory and member of One Health Task force. At the onset of COVID-19 pandemic, Dr. Kaul led COVID-19 response for Oklahoma State and served as Clinical Director for the new Oklahoma Pandemic Center for Innovation and Excellence. In addition, Dr. Kaul served as Technical Consultant for DTRA, contributing to pandemic response across multiple nations. He also served as Senior Health Advisor to US Department of State and US Army.

In 2024, Dr. Kaul joined Public Health Foundation of India (PHFI) to establish first public health university in India and served as founding Vice Chancellor of PHFI University. Currently, he is serving as the Vice Chancellor of Malla Reddy Vishwavidyapeeth - one of the largest healthcare universities in India.

Dr. Kaul has authored more than 120 scientific papers, delivered around 220 presentations, and holds six U.S. patents. His contributions to global health have earned him numerous awards, including Secretary's Expeditionary Service Award from US Department of State, and Global Healthcare Lifetime Achievement Award.

The Kashmir Education, Culture & Science Society feels proud to present the

KECSS Distinguished Award to Dr. Anil Kaul

for his outstanding contributions in the field of Science & Research

Prof. R.N.K Bamezai
Chairman JMC &
President KECSS

Arun Shaila
President
KCHBS

Kapil Kaul
Gen. Secretary
KECSS



New Delhi, 5 April, 2026



The Kashmir Education, Culture and Science Society (Regd.)

New Delhi

The Kashmir Education, Culture and Science Society
is pleased to confer the

KECSS Distinguished Award-2026

to

Ms. Nirupama Kotru

*For her outstanding contributions in the field of
Public Service*



Nirupama Kotru is an officer of the Indian Revenue Service of the 1992 batch, and is currently posted as Chief Commissioner of Income Tax -7, Mumbai, with additional charge of CCIT International Tax, West Zone. She has worked in the Income Tax Department at Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai and Pune. She was instrumental in setting up of the International Tax Directorate in the Department.

She did her schooling from Delhi Public School, Mathura Road where she was Head Girl of senior school. She completed her BA (Hons) in Economics from St. Stephen's College (Delhi University) and MA in Politics & International Relations from Jawaharlal Nehru University. In 2017, she completed a second MA in Public Policy and Sustainable Development from TERJ University, Delhi.

She was posted on deputation to Central Government from Oct. 2009 to Jan., 2012 in the Ministry of Corporate Affairs, where she was responsible for various e-governance initiatives of the Corporate Affairs Ministry, including the prestigious corporate filing portal MCA21. She helped set up the Indian Institute of Corporate Affairs at Manesar. She helped roll out the National Voluntary Guidelines for Business Responsibility and helped draft India's Corporate Governance Guidelines and Competition Policy, among other initiatives.

From Feb. 2012 to Jan. 2015, she was posted as Director (Films) in the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting, Government of India, where she drove India's participation in prestigious film festivals such as Cannes, Berlin and Toronto, and also promoted Indian cinema at home by organizing International Film Festival of India at Goa and the National Film Awards. She also looked after the administration of media units of the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting such as NFDC, as well as policy matters such as censorship. She helped set up single window clearance system for film shootings and laid the groundwork for setting up of the national institute on animation, gaming and visual effects.

From 2018 to 2021, she was posted as Joint Secretary in the Ministry of Culture, Govt of India, where she helped redefine role of prestigious national academies such as Sahitya Akademi, National School of Drama & Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, and drove several initiatives such as Sangam App under National Audio Visual Archives, Vedic Heritage portal, National Manuscripts Mission etc. She helped modernize iconic museums like Victoria Memorial and Indian Museum, Kolkata and National Museum, Delhi and was responsible for setting up new galleries such as Ajanta (AR-VR) gallery at National Museum. In 2019, she drove India's participation after a hiatus of 8 years, at the prestigious Venice Biennale.

During the second wave of Covid-19, a lot of people, especially from artist community, reached out to her for medical assistance. Under her leadership, Gandhi Smriti & Darshan Samiti developed Covid seva, a one-stop solution for Covid resources.

She was posted as Additional Secretary & Financial Advisor in Ministry of Coal with additional charges of Ministries of Mines and Minority Affairs, from 2021 to 2025. Her interests include writing short stories and poems, and articles on cinema, parenting etc. In 2012 she released an album of nirgun bhajans, called 'Upasana'. Her first book on cinema, an anthology of essays on Hindi cinema of the 1970s, was published in 2024.

*The Kashmir Education, Culture & Science Society feels proud to present the
KECSS Distinguished Award to Smt. Nirupama Kotru
for her outstanding contributions in the field of Public Service*

Prof. R.N.K Bamezai
Chairman JMC &
President KECSS

Arun Shaila
President
KCHBS

Kapil Kaul
Gen. Secretary
KECSS



New Delhi, 5 April, 2026



The Kashmir Education, Culture and Science Society (Regd.)

New Delhi

The Kashmir Education, Culture and Science Society
is pleased to confer the

KECSS Distinguished Award-2026

to

Ms. Ankita Raina

*For her outstanding contributions in the field of
Sports*



Ankita Raina was born on January 11, 1993, in Ahmedabad, Gujarat, to a Kashmiri Pandit family that had relocated from the Pulwama district during the 1990 exodus. Growing up in Ahmedabad, she developed a passion for tennis that propelled her to become one of India's most accomplished professional athletes on the international stage.

Raina has been a cornerstone of India's national team, representing the country in numerous competitions, including the Billie Jean King Cup and the Asian Games. A career highlight occurred at the 2018 Asian Games in Jakarta, where she secured a bronze medal in women's singles, becoming only the second Indian woman after Sania Mirza to achieve this feat.

On the professional circuit, Raina has seen significant success on the ITF Women's World Tennis Tour, capturing multiple singles and doubles titles. Her consistent performances led her to break into the top 200 of the WTA singles rankings—a major milestone for Indian tennis. She has also competed in several Grand Slam tournaments, gaining elite experience in both singles qualifiers and doubles events.

Known for her resilient baseline game and fighting spirit, Raina is a respected figure in the sport. Beyond her technical achievements, she serves as an inspiration for aspiring young athletes in India. Her journey of perseverance and dedication makes her a vital role model for the next generation of women pursuing professional sports.

*The Kashmir Education, Culture & Science Society feels proud to present the
KECSS Distinguished Award to Ms. Ankita Raina
for her outstanding contributions in the field of Sports*

Prof. R.N.K Bamezai
Chairman JMC &
President KECSS

Arun Shaila
President
KCHBS

Kapil Kaul
Gen. Secretary
KECSS



New Delhi, 5 April, 2026



The Kashmir Education, Culture and Science Society (Regd.)

New Delhi

The Kashmir Education, Culture and Science Society
is pleased to confer the

KECSS Distinguished Award-2026

to

Dr. Ashish Kaul

For his outstanding contributions as
an Author & Writer



Dr. Ashish Kaul is a transformative force in India's corporate and media world, a strategist, storyteller, and cultural architect with over three decades of industry-defining impact.

As Group Executive Vice President of Zee Network/Essel Group, he shaped India's media landscape through landmark ventures: Dish TV, DNA Newspaper, the Indian Cricket League, and Playwin. As Group CEO of News 24 & BAG Network and CEO of Prakashjha Productions, each role bore his signature of operational excellence and creative vision.

A prolific writer and fierce advocate, his columns spanning women's empowerment, gender bias, terrorism, and cultural preservation have appeared in The Hindu, India Today, Fortune Magazine, Financial Express, Hindustan Times, The Pioneer, Business World, and beyond. His words do not merely inform, they challenge, provoke, and inspire.

His six globally acclaimed bestsellers; including Refugee Camp, Didda: The Warrior Queen, and 1967: The Parmesiwari Agitation, released by Union Cabinet Ministers and Amitabh Bachchan, establish him as a literary force of national consequence.

His landmark research project Streedesh resurrects thirteen heroic women of undivided Kashmir, erased by regimes and reduced to myth, whose legacies span five thousand years from the Mahabharata era to modernity. Transformed into a celebrated dance drama by Padma Shri Dr. Sonal Mansingli's troupe; performed before diplomats of fourteen nations and now part of official Government archives—Streedesh is a cultural triumph without parallel.

The first and sole recipient of a Government of India Senior Fellowship from CCRT, Ministry of Culture, Dr. Kaul embodies one enduring truth: commerce and conscience are not opposing forces, they are complementary ones.

Dr. Kaul is a recipient of commendations by the Prime Minister of India, The Hon'ble Governor of Maharashtra. He has also received numerous awards and recognitions including National Brilliance Award for excellence in Education & Media.

*The Kashmir Education, Culture & Science Society feels proud to present the
KECSS Distinguished Award to Dr. Ashish Kaul
for his outstanding contributions as an Author & Writer*

Prof. R.N.K Bamezai
Chairman JMC &
President KECSS

Arun Shaila
President
KCHBS

Kapil Kaul
Gen. Secretary
KECSS



New Delhi, 5 April, 2026



The Kashmir Education, Culture and Science Society (Regd.)

New Delhi

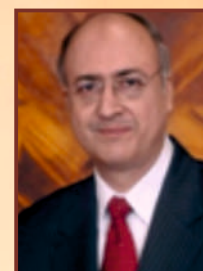
The Kashmir Education, Culture and Science Society
is pleased to confer the

KECSS Distinguished Award-2026

to

Shri Dipak Haksar

*For His Outstanding Contributions In The Field Of
Business and Entrepreneurship*



Mr. Dipak Haksar's four-decade career at ITC Hotels exemplifies visionary leadership, integrity and service. Beginning at ITC Maurya, he rose through operational roles to Vice President of Operations (Luxury Hotels), was appointed Chief Operating Officer of ITC Hotels and Welcom Hotels in 2008, and served as Divisional Chief Executive from 2015 until his retirement in March 2020.

He led iconic hotel launches and strategic expansion across India, elevating standards while nurturing teams. Credited with institutionalizing "Responsible Luxury," Mr. Haksar integrated sustainability into hospitality, positioning the brand as a global benchmark. Under his stewardship many properties achieved carbon-positive, water-positive and solid-waste-recycling-positive status, and secured LEED® Platinum ratings — tangible proof that profitability and purpose can align.

Beyond ITC, he shaped India's tourism direction as Chairperson of the ASSOCHAM National Council for Tourism & Hospitality and the CII National Tourism Council, and continues to advise both bodies to promote inclusive, environmentally responsible growth that benefits communities and conserves heritage.

A proud alumnus of Cornell University, Shri Ram College of Commerce and Scindia School, he remains deeply committed to education and youth development, serving on the Board of Governors of Scindia School and the Management Committee of Springdales School, Dhaula Kuan. Soft-spoken and reflective, he draws inspiration from Vedanta and meditation, mentoring future leaders with humility and purpose.

For embedding sustainability into hospitality, advancing national tourism policy, and nurturing generations of leaders, we honour Mr. Dipak Haksar for his exemplary contributions to industry and society. His legacy endures through people, places, institutions and policies.

*The Kashmir Education, Culture & Science Society feels proud to present the
KECSS Distinguished Award to Shri Dipak Haksar
for his outstanding contributions in the field of Business & Entrepreneurship*

Prof. R.N.K Bamezai
Chairman JMC &
President KECSS

Arun Shaila
President
KCHBS

Kapil Kaul
Gen. Secretary
KECSS



New Delhi, 5 April, 2026



The Kashmir Education, Culture and Science Society (Regd.)

New Delhi

The Kashmir Education, Culture and Science Society
is pleased to confer the

KECSS Distinguished Award-2026

to

Shri Vinod Kaul

*For his outstanding contributions in the field of
Culinary & Hospitality*



Shri Vinod Kaul is a culinary and hospitality professional with over four decades of a remarkable career in the hospitality industry. Mr. Kaul has shaped hotels, QSR kitchens, fine-dine restaurants, and food services across multiplexes all over India, working with prestigious names such as Taj Hotels, ITC Hotels, The Imperial Hotel New Delhi, India Habitat Centre, Mayfair Hotels, Udaipur's HRH Group, Lemon Tree Hotels and WAVE Group. His expertise in facility and kitchen planning, design, setup, project management and staff training has helped create memorable dining experiences that have raised the bar for hospitality standards in the country. He has been a prolific food writer, a judge for renowned food columns, a national-level culinary competitor, and the creative force behind food festivals that celebrated the Kashmiri cuisine on national stage in the early 90s.

But beyond his professional achievements, Mr. Kaul takes particular pride in his role as a mentor and guide to several KP boys who walked in his footsteps. As a member of the Kashmiri Pandit community, he has made a conscious effort to provide support and guidance to young Kashmiri Pandit boys seeking careers in the hospitality industry. He has helped many secure their first opportunities in kitchens and service operations, guiding them through the rigours of challenging hotel life, and showing them how to not just survive, but truly thrive and grow. Many successful careers in hotels, restaurants, and food enterprises today trace their beginnings to his encouragement, his training, and his belief in their potential. For Mr. Kaul, this legacy of mentoring and community-building is as meaningful as any professional milestone.

Today, as he is recognized by the Kashmiri community for his contribution to the culinary and hospitality industry, as well as his support to the Kashmiri Pandit community, Mr. Kaul views this honour as a shared celebration with all those whose paths have crossed his during this four-decade journey.

*The Kashmir Education, Culture & Science Society feels proud to present the
KECSS Distinguished Award to Shri Vinod Kaul
for his outstanding contributions in the field of Culinary & Hospitality*

Prof. R.N.K Bamezai
Chairman JMC &
President KECSS

Arun Shaila
President
KCHBS

Kapil Kaul
Gen. Secretary
KECSS



New Delhi, 5 April, 2026



The Kashmir Education, Culture and Science Society (Regd.)

New Delhi

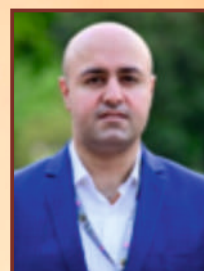
The Kashmir Education, Culture and Science Society
is pleased to confer the

KECSS Distinguished Award-2026

to

Shri Aditya Raj Kaul

*For His Outstanding Contributions In The Field Of
Journalism & News Media*



"Aditya Raj Kaul is an alumnus of Ramjas College and Xavier Institute of Communications. He also attended IIM Bangalore's Media management program. Before his editorial rise, he gained national prominence at age 17 for leading the "Justice for Priyadarshini Mattoo" campaign, earning him a spot among India Today's Top 25 Youth Icons in 2007.

Aditya Raj Kaul is a distinguished Indian journalist and the Senior Executive Editor for Geopolitics, National Security, and Strategic Affairs at NDTV. With a career spanning over 18 years, Kaul has established himself as a leading authority on Jammu & Kashmir, Pakistan, and regional diplomacy. His professional expertise includes conflict reporting where he has reported from the frontlines of global and domestic flashpoints, including Israel, Palestine, Iraq, Siachen, and Eastern Ladakh. He in addition conducts high-profile interviews and his portfolio includes exclusive conversations with global heads of state such as Narendra Modi, Benjamin Netanyahu, Mahimoud Abbas, and Sheikh Hasina, alongside key figures like Dr. S. Jaishankar and Jimmy Wales. He also covers global commentary and is a frequent expert guest on international networks like the BBC and CNN, wherein he bridges Indian strategic perspectives with global audiences.

Kaul's contributions have earned him over 20 honors, notably the Ram Jethmalani Journalism Prize (2023). His leadership has been recognized through prestigious fellowships, including the U.S. State Department's ACYPL (2020) and the Bucarius Summer School (2023) in Germany.

Beyond the newsroom, he has served as a research consultant for major Indian films, including the box-office record-breaker Dhuwandhar and the political thriller Article 370.

*The Kashmir Education, Culture & Science Society feels proud to present the
KECSS Distinguished Award to Shri Aditya Raj Kaul
for his outstanding contributions in the field of Journalism & Media*

Prof. R.N.K Bamezai
Chairman JMC &
President KECSS

Arun Shaila
President
KCHBS

Kapil Kaul
Gen. Secretary
KECSS



New Delhi, 5 April, 2026



Kashmir Education, Culture, & Science Society (KECSS)

(A BRIEF)

K.E.C.S.S, an off shoot of Kashmir CO-OP House Building Society (KCHBS) Ltd. Regd. in the year 1950) and an apolitical body, was initially registered in 1966 and with new additions in 1983 in New Delhi. The Objective of KECSS has been to Preserve and Sustain the Kashmiri Art, Culture, Language and Heritage, and empower Kashmiri society through Education and Science. With the missionary zeal the effort has been made to encourage study and research in these fields, establish and operate libraries and reading rooms, and advance proposed objectives.

The members of the KECSS, irrespective of cast, creed, and religion, are drawn from: writers, artists, scientists, authors, literary critics, academicians, journalists, entrepreneurs, and achievers in different walks of life. KECSS organizes from time to time academic and scientific seminars / discussions / deliberations on Kashmir and about Kashmiri people. Additionally, stage and musical performances from budding artists of J&K and Delhi-NCR region, art & culture related art exhibitions, are show-cased from time to time which bring vibrancy and raises collective consciousness within the community. Two such annual events of SHUHUL TAAPH and SHIKARA are an attraction for both Kashmiris and non-Kashmiris, thus providing glimpses of Kashmiri Culture and Cuisine in Delhi.

OUR MISSION:

At KECSS, our mission is to empower individuals through education and advancing knowledge, preserve the cultural tapestry and heritage of Kashmir, and advance scientific knowledge, for the betterment of our society and beyond. We believe in the inherent potential of every individual and are dedicated to creating opportunities that foster growth, learning, and community engagement.

We believe in:

Educational Excellence: Illuminating Paths to Success

Education is the cornerstone of progress, and at KECSS, we

are dedicated to providing quality educational programs, scholarships, and mentorship opportunities. By investing in the intellectual development of individuals, we aim to create a ripple effect of positive change that extends throughout our community and beyond.

Cultural Richness: Nurturing Identity and Unity

Kashmir's cultural heritage is diverse and vibrant, and KECSS is committed to its preservation. Through cultural events, exhibitions, and projects, we celebrate the traditions that make our community unique. We believe that by nurturing our cultural identity, we strengthen the bonds that unite us and contribute to a more harmonious society.

Scientific Exploration: Shaping the Future through Innovation

Science is a powerful catalyst for progress, and KECSS actively supports scientific research and innovation. By collaborating with local and international partners, we aim to contribute to the global pool of knowledge and inspire the next generation of thinkers, inventors, and problem-solvers.

Community Impact: Enriching Lives, Building Futures

KECSS is more than an organization we are a community of individuals dedicated to making a positive impact. Through educational outreach, cultural awareness programs, and collaborative initiatives, we strive to uplift our community and create a brighter future for all.

We would highly appreciate if you get involved and join ss on the Journey of Transformation. Whether you're passionate about education, culture, science, or community development, there's a place for you at KECSS. Explore our programs, become a member, or contribute to our cause. Together, we can create a legacy of empowerment, cultural preservation, and scientific progress.

We remain Committed,

TEAM-JMC (KECSS & KCHBS)



KECSS Activity Report From Secretary's Office

The Kashmir Education, Culture and Science Society (Regd.) is a registered society with head office at Kashmir Culture Center, Pamposh Enclave, Greater Kailash 1, New Delhi-110048. Kashmir Education Society foundation was laid in 1960 as an initiative to provide members of Kashmiri community a platform for liberal learning in citizenship, development and to retain a broad and holistic outlook.

In 1983 the Kashmir Education, Culture and Science Society began to be known as Kashmir Education, Culture and Science Society (Regd.) (K.E.C.S.S) as an off shoot of K.C.H.B.S to focus on Kashmiri Culture, language, arts, literature & science, to encourage study and research in these fields.

Under the banner of Kashmir Education, Culture and Science Society (Regd.) a School, a Library, a community club, Kashmiri bakery and Kashmiri artifacts & spices are being operated and managed in order to make sure people have access to basic amenities.

It also organizes programs for the community by the community artist, singers, speakers etc. in order to promote Education, Culture & Science.

Last year, we launched vibrant initiatives to celebrate Kashmiri culture. Shikara has quickly become a festival to cherish, with its 4th edition drawing over 1500 enthusiastic attendees. Shuhul Taaph proudly marked its 15th glorious edition, reflecting its enduring legacy and community spirit. We also hosted webinars with renowned Kashmiris across diverse fields, creating platforms for dialogue and pride in our heritage. Partnering with other Kashmiri communities, we continue to champion cultural promotion.

The KECSS Awards now include new categories— Entrepreneurship, Young Sports Achievers, and Young Artists—ensuring our youth gain recognition as torchbearers of identity. Looking ahead, we are excited to unveil the Prominent Personalities Memorial Awards at Shuhul Taaph's 16th edition on 5 April 2026. Together,

these milestones embody our journey of cultural revival and shared pride.

Mentioned below are some main events organized by Kashmir Education, Culture and Science Society (Regd.) during the FY 2025 - 2026:

1. Shuhul Taaph 15th Edition took place on 27th April 2025 at Kashmir Culture Center, Pamposh Enclave, Greater Kailash 1, New Delhi 110048.



The 15th Edition of Shuhul Taaph was a grand celebration of Kashmiri culture and community spirit. The day began with registration and a welcome tea,



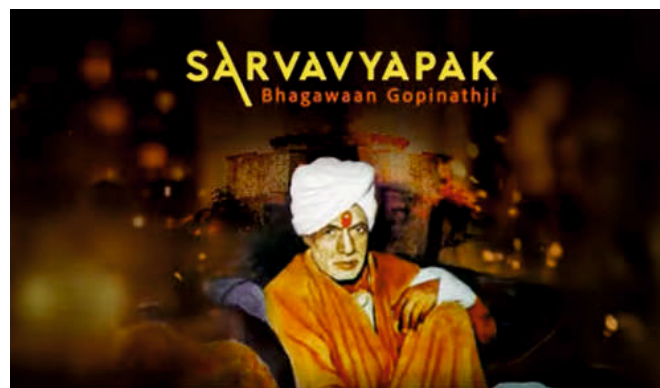
followed by the inauguration of the art gallery, lamp lighting, and traditional performances including Saraswati Vandana and Shiv Tandav. The release of the Shuhul Taaph Magazine 2025 and the prestigious KECSS Awards set an inspiring tone. The afternoon featured engaging cultural segments such as comedy acts by Anil Koul Chingari Ji, a thought-provoking panel discussion on “Restoring Our Identity – The Way Forward,” and captivating performances including Kosher Roff dance, the play Lall Ded by JK Koul Bezaan Ji & team, and a soulful musical recital by Pt. Abhay Rustum Sopori Ji. The event concluded with felicitation of participants, closing remarks, and a community dinner. With its rich blend of tradition, dialogue, and artistry, Shuhul Taaph once again reinforced its legacy as a cornerstone of Kashmiri cultural revival.

2. Shikara 4th Edition took place on 14th Dec 2025, at Kashmir Culture Center, Pamposh Enclave, Greater Kailash 1, New Delhi 110048.



Shikara Fest 2025 was a vibrant celebration of Kashmiri culture, held on 14 December. The day began with the ceremonial commencement, followed by an inspiring event video and traditional Saraswati Vandana with lamp lighting. The festival showcased Kashmir through Bollywood dance performances, fashion fusion segments featuring divas and mothers with their children, and soulful musical renditions by Sh. Meeru Raina (Sukoon) and Smt. Ragini Rainu (Meher: Raag-e-Ruhani). The evening concluded with the felicitation of artists and attendees, marking the 4th edition of Shikara as a resounding success. With over 1500 enthusiastic attendees, the fest has firmly established itself as a cultural highlight to look forward to each year.

3. Screening of Sarvavyapak Bhagwan Gopinath ji, took place on 3rd May 2025, at Kashmir Culture Center, Pamposh Enclave, Greater Kailash 1, New Delhi 110048.



The film, based on the biography written by Shankar Nath Fotedar and produced by the Bhagawaan Gopinathji Trust, portrays the life, teachings and spiritual journey of the revered saint, Bhagawaan Gopinathji.

4. KECSS has proudly launched a series of insightful webinars, bringing together distinguished voices from diverse fields. These sessions span entrepreneurship, technology, health, arts, philosophy, and culture—creating platforms for learning, dialogue, and inspiration. By engaging experts and community members alike, the webinars are enriching our collective understanding while strengthening Kashmiri identity in contemporary times.

Wishing all the best to all for the next event Shuhul Taaph

Webinar	Title	Resource Person	Date
1	Entrepreneurship: Unlock Your Entrepreneurship Potential & Live a Life of Freedom	Sh. Vinod C. Pandita — Business Transformation Coach	26 July 2025
2	From Vision to Reality: How AI Is Transforming the Way We Build	Sh. Vineith Koul — Founder, ImmersiveQuest.ai & ImmersiveData.ai	30 August 2025
3	Cancer: An Overview – Basics and Prevention	Air Vice Marshal (Dr.) Ram Krishan Ganjoo, AVSM, VSM (Retd.)	20 September 2025
4	Visual Narratives of Belongings and Displacement	Shri Veer Munshi — Renowned Visual Artist	02 November 2025
5	Basic Tenets of Kashmir Saivism	Dr. Advaitavadini Kaul — Scholar of Kashmir's cultural and intellectual heritage	20 December 2025
6	The Future of Kashmiri Pandits in the Age of AI	Prof. (Dr.) Subhash Kak, USA — Webinar on community & AI	24 January 2026
7	Kashmiri Culture	Shri T. N. Dhar 'Kundan' — Distinguished Scholar, Poet, Editor	28 February 2026

2026 (16th Edition), to be held on 5th April 2025.

Regards

Kapil Kaul,
General Secretary
K.E.C.S.S



Shuhul Taaph - 2025







Shikara Fest - 2025





KECSS has been successful in giving due space to socio-cultural activities organized by Kashmiri Pandit Community both in different parts of the country and abroad. ShuhulTaaph Magazine is emerging as a popular mouth piece of Socio Cultural Activities year after year

JAMMU KASHMIR VICHAR MANCH 2025 AT A GLANCE

JKVM took a pledge at the beginning of the year to engage with the community youth and bring them to the front stage and give them the responsibility to lead the community. We proudly announce that this year all the programme of JKVM were conceived, directed and executed by our JKVM Youth Team.

1. Sammohik Shivratri Mahotsava- 02nd March 2025, Sunday was organised at Hindi Bhawan, Deen Dayal Upadhyay Marg, New Delhi. The function was presided over by **Prof. (Dr.) K.G. Suresh**, Former Vice Chancellor of Makhanlal Chaturvedi National University of Journalism and Communication, Bhopal. The programme constituted of a cultural programme, rituals and felicitating the prominent Kashmiri pandits in the following Categories-

- Shauraya Samman
- Award for literature
- Award for Outstanding community service
- Institutional contribution for upliftment of the community;
- Outstanding nationalistic contribution.



2. Batta Loot Day was organised on 13th July 2024 at Malviya Smriti Bhawan, Deen Dayal Upadhyay Marg, New Delhi. The function was presided by **Sh. Alok Bansal Ji**, Executive Director South Asian Institute of Strategic Affairs (SAISA) and director India Foundation.



3. Balidhan Diwas- 14th September was observed at Shaheedhi Sathal B. k. Ganjoo Park, Kali Bari Marg, New Delhi. The function was organised in association with AIKS AND GKPD. The whole community came together

to pay floral tributes to the Martyrs. **Sh. Sanjay Kundu Ji**, IPS(Retired) former DG Police, Himachal Pradesh and the guest of honour was **Shri Ram Niwas Ji**, IPS(Retired) former DG police, Chhattisgarh and **Sardar Paramjit Singh Chandok**, Chief advisor and vice president Delhi Sikh Gurdwara Management committee.



4. Fourth M. K. Kaw Memorial lecture was organised on 01st November 2025 virtual via Zoom and facebook. The prominent speakers at the occasion were **Dr. Sushil Wattal Ji**, **Dr. Anusheel Munshi Ji** and **Shri M.K. Talashi Ji**. The speakers spoke about the life and works of Bhagwan Gopi Nath Ji, Swami Lakhman Joo Ji, and Swami Nand Lal Ji respectively.



KHST SOCIO -CULTURAL EVENT

KHST Hyderabad organised its Varshik Hawan & Cultural Program on 24th & 25th January 2026. We feel truly blessed to have had the full participation of our members from across the twin cities of Hyderabad and Secunderabad.

Every year, KHST Hyderabad makes a conscious effort to go beyond routine activities and introduce meaningful initiatives focused on preserving and promoting our Kashmiri Pandit heritage. Along with our regular programmes such as “Speak in Kashmiri”, make Kashmiri Cuisine available, Bhajan Mandli and facilitating availability of Kashmiri essentials (spices, Jantri, Authoor, etc.), we strive to keep our community connected and involved.

A key focus of KHST is to provide a platform where our youth feel a sense of belonging, stay rooted in their identity, and develop an understanding of our history—especially the pain and reality of the Exodus from our motherland, Kashmir.

In this spirit, this year we introduced a special initiative for our children: screening Kashmiri cartoons and cultural stories, along with printed booklets featuring Kashmiri ABC with KP cultural themes. The children were encouraged to read, follow, and reflect on the story of the Kashmiri Pandit Exodus.

This initiative was widely appreciated, and the kids participated with great enthusiasm. We are sharing a few photos and videos with all our community.

IKPandit

ALL INDIA KASHMIRI SAMAJ

On 18th May, a book discussion event on “*The Kashmir Chronicles*” authored by **Dr. Vijay Sazawal** was organized at **Samavar Hall, Greater Kailash, New Delhi**. The event was presided over by Hon'ble Rajya Sabha MP **Shri Vivek Tankha**, who endorsed the abrogation of Article 370 and emphasized that peace in the valley can only be achieved through the return of **Kashmiri Pandits** to their homeland.

AIKS President delivered the keynote address, underlining the vital role of civil society in Kashmir. The book review was presented by **Ashok Manwati** and the



event was anchored by **Shri Sudhir Shah**, Treasurer of AIKS. Prominent AIKS members including **Vijay Kashkari (Sr. VP)**, **M.K. Pajan (VP)**, **Arun Shali**, and **Sanjay Sapru** were present.

AIKS President Felicitated at Interfaith Sammelan

On 23rd September 2025, AIKS President Shri Ravinder Pandita was felicitated by the Delhi Sikh Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee (DSGPC) during a *Sarv Dharam Sammelan* held at the ICAR Convention Centre, Pusa Campus, New Delhi. The event commemorated the 350th Martyrdom Anniversary of Sri Guru Teg Bahadur Ji, revered as *Hind Di Chadar* for his supreme sacrifice in upholding religious freedom and human dignity.

The interfaith gathering was graced by eminent spiritual and religious leaders, including Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, Shri Chidanand Saraswati, Acharya Lokesh Ji, Shri Goswami Ji, Haji Syed Salman Chishty Ji, Rabbi Ezekiel Issac Ji, Sh. Bhikku Sanghsena Ji, Rajyogi Binny Sareen Ji, Sh. Anil Joseph Ji, and Sardar Giani Raghbir Singh Ji. The distinguished guests of honour included S. Manjinder Singh Sirsa and Shri Kapil Mishra, Cabinet Ministers, Government of Delhi.

In his address, Shri Ravinder Pandita, the only speaker representing Jammu & Kashmir, highlighted Guru Teg Bahadur Ji's historic role in protecting Kashmiri Pandits from persecution during the reign of Aurangzeb. He emphasized that the Guru's sacrifice remains a timeless message of unity, courage, and interfaith harmony. Shri Pandita further urged the younger generation to



actively participate in inter-religious and cultural dialogues that strengthen India's social fabric and uphold its pluralistic ethos.

Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the apex organization, AIKS. The AGM coincided with a historic milestone as AIKS completed 45 years of dedicated service to the Kashmiri Pandit community. AIKS remains the only organization with such a long and uninterrupted legacy, consistently upholding its Constitution, democratic values, and principles through changing times.

Guided by transparency, integrity, and an unwavering commitment to community welfare, AIKS has fostered strong leadership across generations, ensuring institutional continuity and credibility. To honour the contributions of its stalwart leaders, a Presidential Wall showcasing photographs and tenures of all past Presidents was unveiled and widely appreciated by the participants. As a commemorative gesture marking 45 glorious years, a 2026 Annual Diary was presented to all attending members as a souvenir.

Following agenda items were discussed in detail:

- **Community Stand on Census:** AIKS resolved to work closely with the Registrar General and Census Commissioner, and engage with the community to increase awareness about the importance of the census. The aim is to build consensus and ensure effective representation of the community's interests in the census process, ultimately contributing to the community's development and welfare.
- **Kashmiri Pandit Community & Special Intensive Revision Process:** AIKS discussed the SIR Process's impact on the displaced Kashmiri Pandit community, which may further marginalize and disempower us politically. AIKS resolved to work with other KP bodies and schedule a meeting with the Chief Election Commissioner of India to address the community's concerns.
- **AIKS Civil Writ Petition:** The AGM members were updated on the latest status of the case in Jammu Kashmir High Court. AIKS expressed appreciation for the dedicated efforts of its team of community advocates/lawyers, led by **Shri P.N Raina**, **Shri P.N Goja**, **Shri Ravinder Bhat**, and **Shri Kashmiri Lal**, who are representing the community's interest pro-bono. Their commitment to the cause was acknowledged and valued by the organization.
- **Return and Rehabilitation of the Community:** It was unanimously agreed that AIKS will highlight the Central/UT Government's inability to build a roadmap for the Kashmiri Pandit community's return. AIKS will advocate for policies facilitating safe

return and rehabilitation, ensuring community well-being and societal reintegration. In absence of a firm plan from the Central Govt or UT Govt, AIKS resolves to lobby for Mr Vivek Tankhaji's Private Member Bill in the Rajya Sabha with full vigour and strength.

ISHWAR ASHRAM TRUST

**FOUNDED BY SHAIVACHARYA ISHWAR SWAROOP
SWAMI LAKSHMAN JOO**

ISHWAR ASHRAM TRUST, Sarita Vihar ,New Delhi is actively engaged in preserving and propagating ancient philosophy of Kashmir Shaivism.

Kashmir Shaivism is known as the Pure *Trika* system. The word *Trika* means the threefold science of man and his world. In the idea of *Trika* there are three energies: *para* (supreme), *apara* (lowest), and *parapara* (combination of lowest and highest).

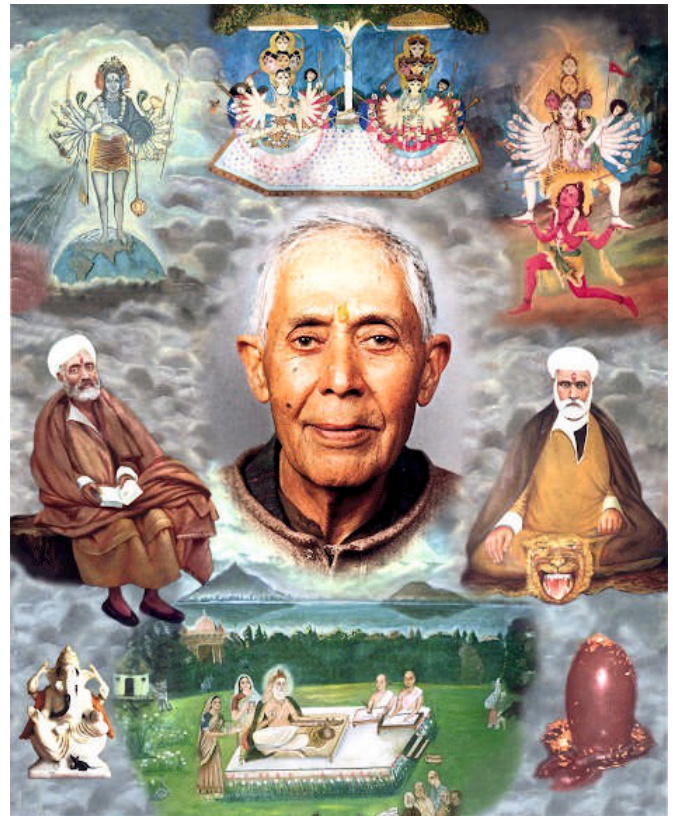
These three energies represent threefold activities of the world. In the thought of *Trika*, it is admitted that this whole universe and every action in it, whether spiritual, physical or wordly is existing in these three energies .

Trika philosophy is meant for any human being without the restriction of caste, creed or color .Its purpose is to enable you to rise from individuality to universality. *Trika* is a triad, a group of three divisions of Kashmir Shaivism, *Agama*, *Spanda* and *Pratyabhijna* systems. *Trika* is also called a triad of Nara, Shakti and Shiva.

The history of this unique and ancient philosophy goes back to the beginning of *Satyuga* when Lord Shiva appeared in the form of *Svacchandana* with five head and eighteen arms. Lord Shiva narrated the various scriptures (*Tantras*) including sixty four *Bhairava Tantras* which are the basis of Monistic Shaivism.

Later in the beginning of *Kaliyuga*, this theory of the *Bhairava Tantras* was lost. Lord Shiva reappeared at Mount Kailasa, not in the form of *Svacchandana* but in the form of *Sri Kanthanatha* and taught the theory of *Bhairava Tantras* to Sage Durvasa who passed on this philosophy from generation to generation through his mind borne sons. Later in 8th Century Kashmir Shaivism tradition flourished in the kashmir valley with Acharya Somananda, Utpladeva, Acharya Abhinavagupta, Kshmeraja and Yogaraja .

In 18th Century Kashmir Shaivism again was revived by Swami Ram. His Chief disciple was Swami Mahtabkank and his disciple Swami Lakshmanjoo was last in this unbroken chain of Kashmir Shaiva Masters. Swami Lakshmanjoo (1907-1991) was the most recent



and one of the greatest of the saints and masters of the ancient tradition of Kashmir Shaivism. Having a deep understanding of the philosophy and practices of Kashmir Shaivism, he was like a rare shining jewel. Because of his intellectual power and an extraordinary level of awareness, he was instrumental in the revival of the supreme philosophy of Kashmir Shaivism. During his lifetime Swamiji had very close association with Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, Swami Sivananda and Swami Muktananda. Swami taught Kashmir Shaivism at his Ishber Ashram over a period of 3 decades to various Indian and western scholars and devotees ancient Kashmir Shaiva Texts.

Swamiji established Ishwar Ashram and Amriteshwar Bhairava Temple at Ishber Srinagar, Kashmir for propagation of Kashmir Shaivism and Offering of Prayers to Lord Shiva. Ishwar Ashram, Ishber, Srinagar continues to attract seekers of Kashmir Shaivism from within and outside India. Temporary accommodation facility is also available at Ishwar Ashram, Ishber, Nishat, Srinagar.

In Swamiji's words "To realize that God and individual are one is the essence of Kashmir Shaivism"

The *Trika* philosophy of Kashmir Shaivism is beautifully expressed in the first verse of Shivadristi, composed by the great Shaiva Master Somananda, founder of the *Pratyabhijana* System of Shaiva Philosophy.

"Let Shiva, who is my own nature, bow down to his real nature, Universal Shiva, through his own Shakti (energy), for removal of bondage and limitation, which is none other than Shiva."

It is through Shakti that Shiva is realized, and for one whose awareness has expanded to embrace the true nature of the play of the Universal Mother, the daily routine of everyday life becomes the real means of worship.

Aims and Objects of Ishwar Ashram Trust, New Delhi include: Propagation of Kashmir Shaivism as propounded by its founder Swami Lakshmanjoo, to publish, print and sell books & publications of Kashmir Shaiva philosophy, to organize Yajnas, Pujas and Satsangs to preach and encourage vegetarianism, to set up scholarships to deserving students and to do such other things as may be incidental or ancillary to the attainment of the main objects of the Trust.



Activities of Ishwar Ashram Trust, New Delhi.

Sunday Puja

On Every Sunday Morning Puja is done at Ashram by devotees by reciting devotional *Sri Gurustuti* Sanskrit Hymns composed by Acharya Rameshwar Jha in praise of Gurudev and recitation of other Devotional Shaiva shlokas followed by playing Audio/Visual Teachings of Kashmir Shaivism.

Timings: 10:30 am – 12:00 noon (Puja)
12:00 Noon (Aarti)
12:15-12:45 Pm (Audio/Videos on Kashmir Shaivism)

Birthday, Varsh and Mahasamadhi Yajna Celebrations

Ishwar Ashram Trust, New Delhi Celebrates Annually

Birthday on *Vaishakha Krishna Dwadeshi* in the Month of April and Varsh Celebrations on 9 May every year of Shaivacharya Swami Lakshmanjoo at Ishwar Ashram Trust, New Delhi and also Annual *Yajna* on Mahasamadhi day of Gurudev in the month of September.

Seminars and Workshops on Kashmir Shaivism

Ishwar Ashram Trust, Sarita Vihar New Delhi Organises on a regular basis, Residential Workshop on Kashmir Shaivism in 1st week December every year. During last 3 years Workshops organised are:

- *Pratibhijnahradyam* – Recognising your True Nature as Shiva (4-7 Dec 2025)
- Significance of *Tattvas* in Kashmir Shaivism – (5-8 Dec 2024)
- Limbs of Yoga in Kashmir Shaivism –(7-10 Dec 2023)

Charitable Activities

Ishwar Ashram Trust, New Delhi on a regular basis gives Scholarships to the needy students for education and also for research work on Kashmir Shaivism to the deserving students. In addition to above IAT also distributes food and clothing to poor and needy from time to time.

Facilities Available at Ishwar Ashram Trust ,New Delhi

- **Kashmir Shaiva Trika Library** – Library has collection of more than 2000 books on Kashmir Shaivism including Kashmir Series and Texts published more than 100 years back on J&K Research Dept. on Kashmir Shaivism.
- **Prayer Hall** – For Sunday Puja
- **Multipurpose Hall** – For Seminars and Workshops
- **Book shop** – For Sale of IAT Publications
- **Residential Accommodation (For short Stay)** – 06 Rooms

Publications

MALINI Quarterly Journal on Kashmir Shaivism (Since last 30 years)

Publications on Kashmir Shaivism – Revealed by Swami Lakshmanjoo

English

- *Kashmir Shaivism - The Secret Supreme*
- *Lectures on Principle and Discipline in Kashmir Shaivism*
- *Shiva Sutras – The Supreme Awakening*
- *Vijnana Bhairva - Manual on Self Realization*
- *Bhagvad Gita in the Light of Kashmir Shaivism*
- *Festival of Devotion & Praise -Shivastotravali by Utpaldeva*

- *Abhinavagupta's Parmarthasara*
- *Kundalini Vijnana Rahaysam*
- *Mystery of Vibrationless Vibration in Kashmir Shaivism – Vasugupta's Spanda Karika and Kshemaraja's Spanda Sandoha*
- *Magical Jewel of Devotion – Stavchintamani*
- *Light on Tantra in Kashmir Shaivism – Abhinavagupta's Tantraloka (3 Volumes)*
- *Shaivacharya Swami Lakshmanjoo- A Brief Life Sketch*
- *Eight Limbs of Yoga in Kashmir Shaivism*

Hindi

- *Sri Shivastotravali of Sri Utpaldeva*
- *Trika Shastra Rahasya Prakriya*
- *Sri Samb Panchshika*
- *Sri Kramanyapradipika*
- *Sri Panchastavi*

Seminars & Religious Tours

Ishwar Ashram Trust, New Delhi has been organising for devotees and members on a regular Seminars with various Institutions and Religious tours and within and outside India.

2019 – Kathmandu – 1 Day Seminar on Kashmir Shaivism in association with Sankarit Univ Nepal, Visit to Pushpatinath Temple.

2022- Varanasi - 2 day Seminar on Kashmir Shaivism in association with BHU at BHU Varanasi, Visit Baba Vishwanath Jyotirlinga Temple and other temples.

2023 –Ujjain – 1 Day Seminar on Kashmir Shaivism at Vikram University Ujjain, visit to Mahakaleswar Jyotirlinga Temple and Omkareshwar Jyotirlinga temple.
2025 – Religious tour to Ayodhya and Mahakumbh Prayagraj

Affiliates

- *Ishwar Ashram, Ishber, Nishat, Srinagar, Kashmir - www.ishwarashram.in*
- *Lakshmanjoo Academy, USA, www.lakshmanjoacademy.org*

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Devinder Munshi
Gen. Secretary
Ishwar Ashram Trust, New Delhi

YKUNTH MANDLI ASHRAM (REGD.) DELHI NCR

A Sacred Resolve to Preserve Kashmiri Pandit Faith, Culture and Sanskars Amidst Exile

Ykunth Mandli Ashram (YMA), a dedicated socio-religious organization of Delhi-NCR, stands today as a shining symbol of resilience, faith and cultural resurgence of the victim Kashmiri Pandit community. Established in 2019, barely six years ago, YMA was conceived and brought to life by committed youth of the displaced Kashmiri Pandit community residing in Faridabad, with a clear, sacred and selfless mission: to protect, preserve and propagate Kashmiri Pandit religion, traditions, sanskars and cultural identity after the brutal and forced exodus from the Kashmir Valley in 1989-90.

Despite decades of displacement, pain and deprivation, these young minds chose not despair but Dharma. Working on a war footing in the Delhi-NCR region, they gave birth to this socio-religious movement under the banner of Ykunth Mandli Ashram, determined to reconnect generations born in exile with their civilizational roots.

The guiding force and mentor of this noble mission is Shri Manoo Ji Pandita, Founder and Mentor of YMA, whose vision and dedication have remained pivotal in every initiative. Under his mentorship, the organisation has grown steadily under the leadership of Late Shri M.L. Raina, Shri M.K. Talashi, Shri Kundan Kashmiri, Sh. Pyari Lal Raina, Raj Kumar Sapru serving as Convenor. Together, this committed team transformed an idea into a vibrant socio-religious institution.

The journey of YMA began at the grassroots with Bhajan and Kirtan programmes in local neighborhoods. It soon expanded into a major cultural initiative named "PARZAN", aimed at educating Kashmiri Pandit youth, many of whom were born and brought up in Delhi-NCR—about their rich traditions, rituals and cultural ethos, which they had little opportunity to experience due to displacement. The overwhelming success of this programme inspired YMA to widen its activities.

Thereafter followed spiritually uplifting events such as Mahā Rudrabhishek in Faridabad, Sant Sammelan at Pomposh Enclave, Greater Kailash, and other religious congregations attended by eminent scholars, religious authorities, community leaders and activists. These



programmes played a crucial role in educating society at large about the religious tenets, spiritual philosophy and tolerant cultural fabric of the Kashmiri Pandit community. YMA further organised Maha Hawan at the Shiv Temple, Pomposh Enclave (GK-I Delhi), Bhajan-Kirtan programmes at the sacred Kheer Bhawani (Tulmula) Temple in Gurugram, and Akhand participation in Yatras in country including Maha Kumb 2025.

and Cultural Pride Among Kashmiri Pandit. Grand and divine Rudra Abhishek was held at SRS Pearl Floors, Sector 87, Faridabad, with full religious zeal and devotion. This spiritually elevating event was organized by Ykunt Mandli Ashram—a dynamic group of spiritually inclined Kashmiri Pandit youth committed to preserving and promoting the rich spiritual and cultural heritage of the KP community.



MAHA RUDRA ABHISHEK 13th April 2025

"Divine Rudra Abhishek (PARTHISHWAR) at SRS Pearl Floors Sector 87, Faridabad Inspires Unity, Devotion,



Led by dedicated, hardcore, enthusiastic members from Delhi NCR, the YMA group has taken upon itself the noble mission of reconnecting the younger generation with age-old traditions, rituals, and values of Sanatan Dharma. Their aim is to ensure that the sacred flame of Dharma continues to shine brightly in every Kashmiri Pandit home. The entire Abhishek Mandal was beautifully adorned with colorful flowers, holy symbols, and divine images of Lord Shiva, Mata Parvati, Bhagwan



Gopinath Ji, and other revered deities, radiating a blissful and sacred aura. Devotees participated in large numbers, and the environment was immersed in deep spirituality.

Maha Rudra Abhishek PATHISHWAR (is a powerful Vedic ritual performed to invoke the blessings of Lord Shiva in his Rudra form, known to eliminate sorrow, obstacles, and negativity. The Shiva Linga was bathed with pure items such as water, milk, curd, honey, ghee, sugar, and Bel (Bilva) leaves, each carrying profound spiritual significance. The chanting of the Shri Rudram from the Yajurveda filled the surroundings with vibrations of peace, power, and divine energy.

Adding to the spiritual ambience, soulful bhajan-kirtan followed the Abhishek. Esteemed singers like Sanjayji Bhat, Virenderji Bhat, H.L. Dhar, Divya Pandita, and Yamini Raina delivered melodious devotional songs that touched every heart. The beats of harmonium, dholak, and junka blended perfectly with the voices of the faithful, elevating the atmosphere to a transcendental plane.

Special mention goes to the young children who performed with enthusiasm and devotion: Jiyansh Raina, Gauri, Aruhi, Ashmita, and Krishant, inspiring everyone with their spiritual engagement at such a young age.

Distinguished seniors and prominent personalities who performed the sacred Parthishwar Seva included Sh. Kundan Kashmiri Ji, Sh. Maharaj Krishan Talashi Ji, Sh. Deepji, Sh. Pyari Lal Raina Ji, Sh. Raj Kumar Sapru, Sh.

Ramesh Ji Labroo, Roshan Lal Bhat, S.L Raina, Desh Raj Koul, Dimple Bhat Ji, Sunil Ji and others. Their presence and participation added grace and depth to the event.

The ritual was conducted under the learned guidance of the YEZMAN: Vinod Ji Bhat Hali and Sushil Ji Pandita, who ensured that every Vedic step was performed with sanctity and correctness. To participate in the sacred rituals, performed Rudra Abhishek Puja, and joined in the powerful chanting of mantras with deep reverence to Lord Shiva, filled my heart with peace, spiritual joy, and renewed commitment to our Dharma.

All guests were warmly welcomed with Red Patka and Tika, a traditional mark of respect and love. Devotees were lovingly served milk, curd, lassi, fruits, and other satvik food items, symbolizing the purity of the occasion.

This spiritual celebration was not just a ritual; it was a living expression of unity, faith, and the rich cultural legacy of the Kashmiri Pandit community. It rekindled the flame of devotion in the hearts of young and old alike, reminding everyone of the path to moksha—freedom from the cycle of birth and death. The Ykunt Mandli Ashram has truly set an inspiring example of how tradition and modernity can walk together. Their dedication serves as a shining beacon for the entire community, demonstrating that when youth lead with faith and purpose, Dharma thrives and flourishes. This Rudra Abhishek Mahotsav will be remembered as a sacred milestone, a gathering that brought together divine energy, communal harmony, and a collective reaffirmation of cultural pride.



Zeyth Ashtami 3rd June 2025

With the divine blessings of Mata Raigna Bhagwati the sacred occasion of Zeyth Ashtami was celebrated with immense devotion and spiritual fervor on 3rd June 2025 in Mata ka Aangan and Banidham Mandir Gurgaon. The Participation of unexpected presence of number of devotees has boosted the morale of hardcore Sevaks of Ykunt Mandli Ashram and promoted them to work harder and harder in the coming times for the community.

We express our deepest gratitude to all elderly mothers and sisters whose selfless efforts and dedication who provided helping hand in this hot summer season to make this event grand. A special note of thanks to Sh. Sanjayji Bhat, Sh. Ajayji Pandita, and the associated respected members of Banidham Sanstha, Gurgaon, for their warm reception and soul-stirring Bhajan Seva, which elevated the spiritual atmosphere and connected every heart to the divine presence of Bhagwati.

Our heartfelt appreciation also goes to members of Mata ka Aangan team for warm welcome thoughtful planning and impeccable arrangements, which added warmth, order, and sanctity to the celebration. May YMA continue to walk this path of devotion, unity, and service.

Samohik Makhil Banidham Mandir Gurugram - 6th ,7th Dec. 2025

Among all its endeavours, the most outstanding and spiritually elevating programme was the Samuhik Yajnopavit (Makhil) Dec. 2025 Ceremony organised at Banidham Temple and Gau Ashram, Sector-55, Gurugram. This exceptionally well-organised religious event witnessed eight Kashmiri Pandit youths undergoing the sacred Yajnopavit Sanskar. Preparations began well in advance, with registrations of willing families, allocation of separate Havan Kunds for each participant, and meticulous planning.

Comfortable accommodation, furnished rooms, bedding, nutritious food, fruits and refreshments were provided to all participating families from 5th to 7th December 2025. The sacred rituals, Mahandirath, Devgon, Havana and Yajnopavit were conducted strictly as per Hindu Shastraic traditions under the guidance of highly learned Brahmins and scholars. The entire Yajnopavit ceremony commenced on the evening of 6th December and concluded peacefully and spiritually on 7th December 2025 at around 8 PM.

The complete religious proceedings were supervised by the eminent scholar Shri M.K. Talashi Ji, ably supported by respected personalities Shri Parey Lal Raina Ji, Shri Rawal Ji and Shri Raj Kumar Sapru. Their soulful bhajans





by Sanjay Ji Bhat & Virender Ji Bhat, Vedic chanting and devotional hymns filled the entire atmosphere with divinity, turning the venue into a mangalmayi and spiritually charged space. Around 350 devotees attended the functions on each day. Dedicated volunteers and sevaks worked tirelessly to ensure the smooth conduct of every ritual.

This grand spiritual event was organised in close collaboration with the Banidham team, especially Shri Ajay Pandita Ji, a renowned community stalwart, Shri Sanjay Bhat, Ji, Shri Sunil Ji and other committed Banidham activists, who ensured uninterrupted support and remained present throughout the programme.

The pivotal force behind this historic ceremony was Sh Manoo Ji Pandita Founder and Mentor of YMA, whose personal supervision, commitment and spiritual vision ensured flawless arrangements. The dedicated role of Shri Jai Krishan Ji and Shri Vijay Pandita Ji, particularly in managing the kitchen, food and hospitality, deserves special appreciation. The entire YMA team, under the leadership of President Shri M.L. Raina, including Shri Kundan Kashmiri Ji, Sanjay Ji Pandita, Ajay ji Pandita, Pinto Ji Bhat, Jai Krishan Ji, Divya Pandita, Meenu Bhat, Sunita Pandita and Sarla Raina Bhat remained actively involved throughout all days of the ceremony.

This was the first time such a grand and well-organised Samuhik Makhil Ceremony was conducted by Ykunt Mandli Ashram, setting an inspiring benchmark for community-led religious initiatives. Eminent personalities including Shri Manoo Ji Pandita Late Shri M.L. Raina Ji, Shri Kundan Kashmiri Ji, Shri Raj Nehru (Former VC) and Shri Ravinder Pandita Ji, President



AIKS, blessed the young Makhil Maharazs and urged them to uphold their sanskars, strengthen community unity, preserve religion and remain rooted in Kashmiri Pandit values.

Yakunt Mandli Ashram firmly resolves to continue organising such meaningful and spiritually enriching programmes in the future, aimed at preserving and promoting Kashmiri Pandit religion, culture, traditions and sanskars for present and future generations.

Yakunt Mandli Ashram today stands not merely as an organisation, but as a growing spiritual movement, firmly rooted in faith, service and the timeless heritage of the Kashmiri Pandit community.

Team Yakunt Mandli Ashram

Sarla Raina Bhat – General Secretary (Public Relations)

Manoo Ji Pandita (Founder)

Mob. 9810060822

COMMUNITY CELEBRATES 350TH MARTYRDOM ANNIVERSARY OF GURU TEGHBAHADURJI IN USA

by Jeewan Zutshi

Milpitas, CA – Over 200 people gathered at the India Community Center in Milpitas on Sunday, November 30, 2025, to mark the 350th martyrdom anniversary of Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji, the ninth Sikh Guru who laid down his life in 1675 to protect religious freedom.

Jeevan Zutshi, founder of IACF, welcomed everyone and served as the master of ceremonies. He spoke briefly about Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji's supreme sacrifice when he refused to convert to Islam and stood up for the religious rights of Kashmiri Pandits.

The program began with soulful Shabad Kirtan by Dr. Charan Kanwal Singh and Reshma Singh. The artists were introduced by noted author Smt. Jessi Kaur.

Several local leaders and dignitaries paid rich tributes to the great Guru. Mr. Gary Singh, Mayor of Union City spoke in punjabi about contributions of Guru Teg Bahadur and emphasized the need for unity in diversity. Hon. Assembly member Alex Lee (24th District) showed lot of appreciation for Indo-American Community Federation (IACF) for continuing to promote unity amongst communities and celebrating the 350th anniversary of Guru Teg Bahadur who laid his life to save diverse religious groups. Hon. Carmel Montano, Mayor of Milpitas paid tribute as well.

Community speakers paid rich tributes to Guru Teg Bahadur ji and also shared their thoughts and admiration. Mr. Uphaar Kotru, President of Kashmiri Overseas Association spoke eloquently about the life of the Sikh guru. Mr. Ramesh Konda, Co-founder of Association of Indo-Americans (AIA) also paid tribute. Mr. Tasawar Jalali, Co-founder of Ibaadatkhana emphasized the need for coming together and promoting harmony to honor the sacrifices of Guru Teg Bahadur. Attendees described the evening as uplifting and a strong reminder of Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji's timeless message : "Fear none and frighten none".

The program ended with closing remarks and a vote of thanks by Mr. SanjeevKak of The Avanti Foundation (TAF).

Delicious food for all attendees was kindly sponsored by Raja Sweets owner Mr. Makhan Singh Bains.

KASHMIRIS OBSERVE INTERNATIONAL MOTHER TONGUE DAY IN BANGALORE

by Vijay Hasia

International Mother Tongue Day was celebrated today at Kashmir Bhavan, Jayanagar Bangalore under the banner of Kashmiri Hindu Cultural Welfare Trust (KHCWT). The function started with Ganesh Vandhana inspiritual melody by Shri Tej Sadhu ji.

followed by Sh Arvind Shah, Chief Editor Shuhul Taaph, a journal, brought out from New Delhi, by KECSS.



In his address, Sh Shah shared a personal experience about his safety during a train journey, when a fellow Kashmiri saved his life from an accident and accommodated him beside, because he was a Kashmiri and spoke in Kashmiri. The connection of language gives a connect of homeland and thus the personal bonds gets an instantaneous link of sharing. He reflected on the misfortune of the 1990 exodus and growing disconnect of young generation from Kashmiri language which, according to him, breathes life into the very identity of the community. Sh RK Mattoo, Chairman, KHCWT in his opening address emphasized the importance of learning, preserving and speaking Kashmiri. He added that youth motivation programs to speak their mother tongue will be held frequently in the Bhavan. Another renowned literateur Prof. RL Shant in his virtual address live from Jammu, spoke on preserving the culture through language and that it must be protected by our youth at all costs. He remarked that language defines our identity, safeguards our cultural heritage and brings us closer as a community. He emphasized



that elders have a responsibility to pass on by speaking Kashmiri regularly with the younger generations. Author and Poet Sh. TN Dhar (Kundan), spoke about literary and spiritual dimensions of the language describing Kashmiri as the need of the soul. Drawing from his own writing, he expressed that language emerges from the depth of soul, the Raesh Vaer(Kashmir). He recited poems from his writing_ "Sounchte Sapan."

Sh. P N Nagri, poet, spoke about his experience of learning Kashmiri from a young age from elders. He reflected on genocide that left community bereft of language and its deep rooted connection. He recited his poem stanzas, the incomprehensible philosophy - "Valk, " " Lockchaar, " and "Self Elevation" - all with emotional and spiritual depth. Among the young, Bitya Jhanvi Gurkha, Coventry Scholar's School, 6th Std student, was an inspiration for all youngsters...

Sh Deepak Sopori, young and budding poet spoke about the aftermath of migration and its adverse effects on the language to carry it forward. He also recited poems from his newly released poetry collection " Peedion Ki Peer, " formally released on the occasion by Sh Kundan.

Sh Kuldeep Pandit, a religious scholar emphasized on the cultural continuity by speaking Kashmiri with all youngsters together with spiritual elevation, that the language was the most essential element of life to sustain and continue in any environment.

The program concluded with the remarks by Sh Vijay Hashia, Trustee, KHCWT who reflected on the 5000 years history of language, comparing it to DNA and a riverbed. The bed is the Sanskrit (DNA) and the river- Nastaliq. He described present Kashmiri as a " Biryani" language polluted by diversity...

All the speakers were felicitated with a shawl as a mark of respect.

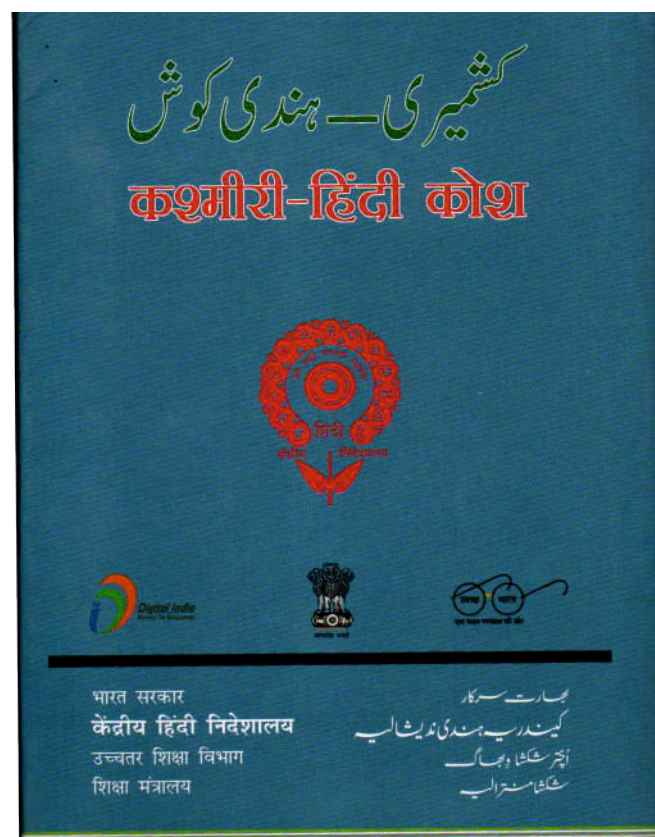
The function ended with the national anthem followed by high tea.

RELEASE OF KASHMIRI DICTIONARY

by Raja Ji Tikko

On the occasion of the International mother tongue Day an innovative 'Kashmiri-Hindi Dictionary' was released by the Director of Central Hindi Directorate, Government of India, Prof. Hitendra Mishra along with the Chief Guest Mr. Shah Faisal IAS, Ministry of Culture, in New Delhi on 21st February, 2026.

The function was organised by AIKS in collaboration with CKLLC and the honours were done by Shri Ravinder Pandita and Dr. Roop Krishan Bhat. The compilation of the dictionary was started some seventeen years ago by the eminent scholar Dr Shashi Shekhar Toshkhani with the help of Shri Brij Nath Betab but the work got slowed down due to some reasons and could not be completed within the given time frame. However, after the covid phase got over two more scholars Dr Roop Krishna Bhat and Dr. Gaurishankar Raina got associated with the project and the dictionary was finally sent to the press in 2024.



The 717 page 'Kashmiri-Hindi Dictionary' has around ten thousand entries with the original Kashmiri word presented in the Perso-Arabic and Devnagri scripts with



meanings and explanations in Hindi and Urdu. It is a ground-breaking work as it has been created with significant changes to influence the younger generation.

Awards for the promotion of Kashmiri language, literature and culture were also presented on this occasion.

The Omkar Koul awards were given to Shri Dhananjay Kaul and Shri Ravinder Kumar Bhan for their contribution to Kashmiri music and dissemination of music respectively.

DAUGHTER OF THE SOIL ENTHRALLS GLOBAL DIGNITARIES WITH SANTOOR RECITAL AT RASHTRAPATIBHAVAN.

by Jammu Bureau

Dr. Veethika Tikoo, an eminent Santoor maestro from Jammu & Kashmir, delivered a spellbinding recital at the iconic Rashtrapati Bhavan, leaving an indelible



impression on an august gathering of national and international dignitaries.

The performance was organized by the Ministry of Culture in the gracious presence of the President of India, Droupadi Murmu, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and the President of Brazil, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, along with members of a high-powered delegation attending the AI Impact Summit.

Dr. Veethika Tikoo, the youngest and only female Santoor Vadika from Jammu & Kashmir, continues to serve as a cultural ambassador of the region's rich classical and Sufiyana musical traditions.



A highly accomplished artiste, Dr. Tikoo has performed extensively across India and overseas. She also holds the distinction of being the first Santoor Vadika to perform at the European Parliament, further strengthening the global footprint of Indian classical music.

Her performance at Rashtrapati Bhavan is being hailed as a proud and historic moment for the cultural fraternity of Jammu & Kashmir.

The opera's mise-en-scène-a seamless blend of set design by Virji Virender Sumbly , props, costumes, lighting, and the actors' movements-was nothing short of spellbinding. The audience sat transfixed until the final moment. And then, as the last note faded, the entire hall erupted in a standing ovation.

MATRKA – A CORE SHARADA TEAM E-MAGAZINE

by Kuldip Dhar
Chief Editor, Matrka



MATRKA, the magazine, for the preservation and promotion of Sharda Script to serve a socio-literary bond for the scholarship of Kashmir and Kashmiri community started as a monthly publication, then bimonthly and now is being published as a quarterly magazine since 2025. This was done to focus on the quality of the content. We published 7 editions in 2022, 6 in 2023, 5 in 2024, 4 in 2025 and recently published on 4th Annual edition on March 1, 2026. The content has significantly improved in volume and quality.

The present Avatar of Matrka started in Feb' 23 on Gauri Tritiya, celebrated as Sharada Day by Core Sharada Team. This became possible due to our efforts to launch a web application <https://satisarsharada.appspot.com>. This application is also now available in Android phones. This was done with an objective to preserve, promote and popularize Sharada Script.

Core Sharada Team (CST) has been conducting various online and offline Sharada script classes free of charge. I personally have been beneficiary of the same, before I assumed the responsibilities of Matrka. It was a request

from Rakesh Kaul one of the founders of CST that we started this journey. This has been possible due to the active participation of about 350 active members of CST, members of the Editorial team and above all some stalwarts, scholars, academicians.

The primary objective of the Magazine remains preservation, promotion and popularizing the script. We are indebted to some of the greats, who keep blessing us with their articles, readers, who keep us agile with their suggestions and comments.

Matrka has become a name in the households of a large population around the world. We circulate it through emails, WhatsApp etc.

We have been publishing articles in Kashmiri, Sanskrit and even Devanagari in the script to popularize it. Though historically only Sanskrit and Kashmiri were written in this script.

The canvas of Matrka is spread from Manuscripts, transliterated never before, Kashmiri festivals, literature and poetry with lot of focus on Kashmir Shaivism.

The credit for making the Publication worldclass in looks and feel goes to Sh Sunil Mahnoori, who gives it the final shape.

Those of you, who wish to get a regular and free copy of Matrka, please email a request to maatrika.cst@gmail.com. All articles can be sent to [Matrka_email maatrika.cst@gmail.com](mailto:Matrka_email_maatrika.cst@gmail.com).

You can also reach me on 9998011597 for anything related to Matrka

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Priya

Living a Non-Migrant

It took me time to understand how unfortunate we have been to be called migrants, when the fact is that we were forced into displacement. I was born in Kashmir and as I started to grow and pick up the sense to understand, I realized that going out from the boundaries, where I resided along with my parents, was seen as unwanted and invited the ire of my parents.

My parents were natives of a village eight kilometers away from the district headquarter. All most of the Kashmiri Pandit community members living in Kashmir had fled their places of habitation in 1990, leaving behind their homes and hearth, acres of productive agricultural land, yielding varieties of crops and running business establishments. Every community member fled in the dark of the night, not informing their kith and kin about their spontaneous decisions to disappear from Kashmir, since the scenes of terror attacks to eliminate Kashmiri Pandits were an order of the day. Kashmiri pandits fled one by one secretly, trying not to make it noticeable. But my parents did not flee. They were insensitive and confused, unable to make a decision or the victim of circumstances, I am still not able to figure it out.

This was a time of turmoil within me. Sometimes I, within the heart of my hearts, had a bad feeling for my parents for their bad decision not to have left Kashmir, as most of the Kashmiri Pandits did. Leaving Kashmir would have given us a vast field to explore. Almost all the children of the displaced Kashmiri Pandits found good opportunities and have proved themselves successful in their careers. But my parents, by not doing what the general community did, restricted their children to face the challenges of new situations and thus the children missed jumbo opportunities to grow.

My parents were living in the ancestral village, but the district administration then took a decision to bring all the Kashmir Pandits who had not migrated (fled) into

makeshift camp under the cover of police protection, and give them the term “non-migrants”. I grew up here in one of the quarters of this camp passing every day with an experience of living as a camp girl. Soon I was admitted to a school. My school was in close proximity to our camp. I walked the distance from the quarter to the school with a group of friends, who were also the dwellers of the camp. A very limited life, home to school and back, and a strong intervention of parents to do my school work and get up early in the morning to study, other activities included helping my mother in domestic chores in a restricted family life within the boundaries of the quarter in the camp. The Parents daily offered puja to the ancestral deity: Thokur. This deity was carried by the parents from their ancestral home in the village to the quarter in the camp. And I also learned some sacred hymns.

After completing my twelfth, my parents deliberated on my future course of education. I pleaded with my parents that I wanted to do an MBA in an Institution at Chandigarh. I qualified the requisite admission requirements and completed my MBA in Finance. Education at the professional institution away from the boundaries of camp life and the strict day to day vigil of parents was an extremely different experience. Sometimes I would miss my parents and sometimes enjoyed the freedom of living without too much of daily interference from my parents. As I grew up in the institution I could value parental care and their close support.

The situation by now had improved in Kashmir, and my parents decided to give up living in the quarter and construct a house in the city near the district headquarter. They, having constructed the house, left the quarter and shifted to live in their new house. I was able to find a campus placement and joined, as an apprentice in a multinational company. Then, it was covid time. My father, a chronic sugar patient was admitted in the

district hospital with a severe covid condition. He was put on a ventilator. With no-one around other than my mother and my school going brother, I decided to travel back to Kashmir and be by the side of my ailing father. God saved him, but he was over ridden with debility. And I decided to be with my parents and try to find a job in Kashmir.

With limited job opportunities, I tried in the government sector but it was not possible for me to get one. I started a tuition Centre. Now, the confusion was looming large on my parents and on me as well – whether to leave Kashmir and try my luck for a career. As the situation revealed, I got employed in a bank, posted in Kashmir.

Now, it was a concern of my parents. The concern for a girl of marriageable age to settle in a family of a married

life. My parents thought of settling their daughter into a good family as their primary outlook. I conceded to my parents, who had found a good match for me to settle in Kashmir. I settled in a new family life in Kashmir.

Kashmir is a good place to live, but being less than 1% of the population segment in Kashmir, kashmiri pandits do not have a minority status. We, both by social order and the order of majoritarian dominance, are a selective class, often to face the mind set of extremism. Having said so, I still believe that Kashmir belongs to Kashmiri Pandits and every Kashmiri Pandit living anywhere in the world must have a personal dwelling in Kashmir and keep a bond with the motherland.

Priya





Dr. Ashok Ogra

The Distance Called Home

“The more we long for home, the farther away it appears.”

This line reflects a common experience of displacement. For Kashmiri Pandits, January 19, 1990 marks a major turning point, associated with the breakdown of a long and continuous presence in the Kashmir Valley. What followed was not a short disruption but a prolonged phase of movement, adjustment, and uncertainty. Even decades later, the sense of interruption continues to influence personal and community life.

Displacement is often described through statistics, timelines, or political developments. However, its deeper impact lies in how it alters memory, identity, and everyday life.

In the years immediately following 1990, the main concern for affected families was survival. Many who had lived in familiar surroundings for generations had to adjust to temporary accommodation, new climates, and limited resources. Life became cantered on basic needs such as shelter, schooling, employment, and healthcare. The change was not only physical but psychological. Leaving suddenly meant separation from established routines, local networks, cultural spaces, and the sense of continuity that comes from long-term residence in one place.

Over time, the focus gradually shifted. As the initial crisis phase passed, rebuilding became the priority. Education played a central role in this transition. Many young people from displaced families pursued higher studies and professional careers, supported by community effort and various institutional measures. This emphasis on education helped restore a sense of direction and stability. Instead of being defined only by loss, families increasingly defined themselves by new achievements and opportunities.

As a new generation grew up, visible signs of recovery appeared. Careers were established, homes were built in different cities, and social connections expanded. Outwardly, many families achieved stability. However,

this progress did not remove the underlying sense of having been uprooted. The loss of a homeland is not limited to the moment of departure; it continues as an ongoing condition that shapes how people relate to place, memory, and identity.

Psychologists sometimes describe this as migration-related grief, referring to the loss of familiar landscapes, language environments, social patterns, and cultural surroundings. This feeling does not always appear in dramatic form. It often surfaces in ordinary situations: conversations about earlier times, memories linked to food, music, or seasonal changes. Such moments connect the present to the past while also highlighting the distance between them.

Writers from displaced communities have addressed this experience, about revisiting childhood locations that feel both familiar and distant. Physical structures may remain, but the social and emotional context changes over time. The remembered place and the present-day place do not fully coincide. As a result, memory becomes layered, combining attachment with an awareness of change.

The developments that led to displacement took place within a climate of fear and tension. Public language, including slogans heard during that period, contributed to shaping this environment. Historical examples from different regions show that repeated phrases can simplify complex social issues into rigid categories of belonging and exclusion. When such language becomes widespread, it can influence how communities perceive one another. Examining this aspect helps in understanding how social atmospheres evolve, without focusing solely on individual actors.

Living away from an ancestral region also affects identity in gradual ways. Kashmiri Pandits have adapted to different languages, professions, and social contexts across India and abroad. Adaptation, however, does not always produce a complete sense of belonging. Many describe an in-between position, connected to current

surroundings while also retaining strong ties to remembered places. This position can broaden perspectives but can also involve emotional complexity.

For younger generations, links to Kashmir are often mediated through family narratives, rituals, and cultural practices rather than direct experience. Cultural continuity therefore requires deliberate effort. Community events, language initiatives, and social associations help maintain shared traditions. Organizations such as Panun Kashmir, along with various local networks, work toward preserving history, customs, and language. Digital platforms have added new ways for dispersed families to remain connected.

The idea of return remains significant but has taken on multiple meanings. Return is not only about physical relocation; it also involves security, livelihoods, social acceptance, and trust. International experiences, including post-conflict reintegration after the Bosnian War, suggest that successful return processes require long-term planning, legal frameworks, and reconciliation efforts. Relocation without supportive conditions does not by itself ensure stability.

For many Kashmiri Pandits, the Kashmir of memory and the Kashmir of the present are not identical. Social and physical environments change over time in all regions. Recognizing this does not reduce attachment but places expectations in a more realistic context. Reconnection may take different forms, such as visits, cultural links, dialogue, or gradual resettlement where conditions allow. Each form of engagement has symbolic and

practical significance.

Older members of the community often express the view that their current place of residence offers security but does not fully replace earlier attachments, while the place associated with belonging feels increasingly distant. This reflects a broader feature of migration. Home is not only a geographic location; it also involves memory, relationships, language, and shared experience.

Balancing attachment to the past with present realities remains an ongoing task. The past cannot be recreated in its original form, but it can be acknowledged and preserved through memory and cultural practice. The present, with its opportunities and constraints, continues to shape everyday life and future directions. Holding these two dimensions together is part of the long-term process of adjustment.

January 19 and the ugly violent incidents thereafter therefore functions as both a historical reference point and a reminder of the human consequences of conflict and division. It highlights the endurance of communities under strain and the continuing search for belonging. In this context, memory serves not only as a record of loss but also as a basis for identity, continuity, and the possibility of renewed connection in forms that fit present realities.

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KECSS

A Bond with our roots



Savita Koul Shali

In the hush of snow-kissed mountains and the whispers of shared memories, being Kashmiri is not just where we're from—it's how our hearts beat. It's in the scent of noon chai, the echo of folk songs, the warmth of hands held in tradition. A story we carry, and a spirit we live.

Such a spirit makes us do things for more than just money, that in fact contribute to society and make us passionate for new things in life, makes us feel fulfilled. Being a part of KECCS has given me such an experience. To be a part of a community, to bring in youngsters, to organize events that help us celebrate our culture with people we love has made me grow in so many ways. The best part of all of this is to introduce our heritage to so many people and bring to them the beauty of it.

The Kashmiri culture is too vast to be hidden in the shadows, which makes it our responsibility and pride to be able to showcase it at a platform like KECCS.



Roop Kishen Bhat

Preservation of our language and culture: An over view and current scenario

In case I have to put forth and highlight the sole and predominant desire of our community members ever since our displacement it was to return to our roots and resettlement in the valley we were forced to leave in 1990. But unfortunately the longing for the return never ended. So far as memories are concerned it appears as if it just happened the other day, but if we go through timeline of years it has been a very long, tiring and unending journey of 36 years of hardships, challenges, miseries, tragedies, separation, segregation and what not. Throughout all this miserable time we always looked forward for the day which would take us back to our roots, our own moojkasheer our home of thousands of years but alas that dawn never dawned. Still we never left hope and have been hoping so even now and may continue hoping till we stay alive. But as is said that time and tide waits for none it has not waited for us too. While we have already lost our very precious elder generation and it is turn now for my generation to loose to the time. Our younger generation has spread along the width and breadth of the globe and our future lies in the hands of politicians of the day, we still have to wait and watch what is in store for us. This is an issue to be dealt and tackled by the dozens of socio-political organizations we have created in our community and who have perhaps been doing so untiringly all these years.

Here I am taking an overview of the issue very close to my heart for realization of which I have spent almost four decades of life and have written a lot about, which is published in various community magazines and Journals i.e. preservation of our mother tongue and culture in Diaspora. However, the present write up has a different perspective.

1. Post displacement from the valley when the whole community was on roads, our existence was threatened, the survival was at stake, and future was engulfed into darkness , people got genuinely busy rebuilding their lives in the alien environments. The *roziroti* got precedence on everything else. It took almost a decade for most of the people to come to terms with new life styles ,however, the *ghar vaapsi* slogan which was always in the air and in the minds of people did not allow many of us to resettle properly. All efforts were towards a temporary resettlement hence many opportunities of appropriate resettlement were lost. Living in a dilemma was not an easy process. Revisiting those times and situations I can say with confidence that had there not been the dilemma people would have been better off.

2. Once first and most difficult stage was over people started realizing that loss of their tangible and intangible culture was much more than the material loss. Without their language and culture they were mere animals of a human zoo. That is where the efforts towards preservation of our mother tongue and culture began. The first and foremost challenge was to choose an appropriate script of the language. Since Nastaliq (Persio-Arabic) which was declared as official script by J&K Government post Independence was not in school curriculum outside valley, Roman was rare and unscientific we decided to use Devanagari script which was popular and widely in use all across the country. We started from the beginning i.e. standardizing the script as per Kashmiri sound system, building and developing the course wear, different types of learning material, developing the software and starting proper distribution of all that not only inside the country but across the globe as well. That was the time when almost

all our concerned academicians worked in close collaboration towards this effort and each one of them contributed their own way. I am fortunate to have played as a coordinator of this pious mission within the community. Having been part of the Central Institute of Indian Languages the prime and that time world's biggest language Institute was of great help. The eminent scholars, writers and academicians we involved in our project work especially in the standardization of the script and preparation of the material were Prof Hari Krishen Kaul, Prof R.L. Shant, Prof Chaman Lal Sapru, Shri. Shahshi Shekhar Toshkhani, Shri S.N. Bhat Haleem, Dr. Soom Nath Raina, Dr. Rajnath Bhat, Dr. Mohan Lal Sar etc besides me. To achieve the target in record time we held many workshops and meetings in Delhi, Jammu and Patiala where I was posted during that period.

3. We worked under the guidance of world famous Linguist Prof. Omkar Koul who was the Director CIIL, at that time. With his vast experience and expertise in the field of Linguistics he remained a torch bearer for the mission of language preservation for the community. We were equally lucky to have an opportunity of authority and able supervision of Sh. M.K. Kaw IAS the then Education Secretary Govt. of India who was instrumental in forming a committee of experts as mentioned above and paving way for smooth development of language learning material in standardized Devanagari script. By 2002 we got published two important books "Let us learn Kashmiri - Primer and Reader" in Kashmiri through CIIL, Mysore. To avoid Governmental hiccups and for prompt publication and distribution we collaborated with Samprati Jammu an NGO of writers and scholars. A young Engineer from the community Mr. Sandeep Bhat prepared the software voluntarily which we named as Arnimaal. This was later on revised and made more compatible by the efforts of our well known language activist widely known for the Zaan project of Kashmiri Pandit Sabha Mumbai Shri. M.K. Raina former Civil Engineer who roped in a private company to do the job, The new improved software named as Aakruti Kashmiri was developed and has been in use since then. There were couple of more guys who helped us develop the course ware i.e. Late Moti Lal Kemmu, Late Jagannath Sagar, Late P.N. Kaul Sayil, Shri Rattan Lal Jowhar, Dr. Premi Romani etc. in the workshop mode and above all the young man Mr. Rinku Koul who had mastered the craft of DTP by then made the DTP copies of the manuscripts. He is the person responsible for the DTP work of most of the books published in Aakruti Kashmiri

Devanagari so far, which number approximately around two hundred till now. Two more primers of the language one by Shri M.K. Raina and other by Shri Arvind Shah and B.L. Deep were also published in later years in Devanagari script. The later one has attractive visuals useful for children.

4. Our writers kept on writing and publishing books in Kashmiri literature in both the scripts and in the first very decade of displacement the books published in Nastaliq Kashmiri in this part of peer panchal outnumbered those across the hill i.e. in the valley which was an admirable job and it catered to both types of readership.

5. Few individuals who played important roles in preservation of our mother tongue and culture deserve a mention here. One name which needs special mention is that of Mr. Sunil Fotedar a young software engineer then who had migrated to USA by mid nineties. This guy took the sole responsibility of designing a website www.ikashmir.net and uploaded most of the Kashmiri works of various scholars including the twin set of books "Let us learn Kashmiri- Primer and Reader" on it for our community members especially youngsters and for posterity. Shri M.K. Raina played an important role through his project Zaan of Mumbai Pandit Sabha and creating and uploading very important materials on his website www.mkraina.com. Dr. B.K Moza of the Kolkata Pandit Sabha and founder editor of Vitesta magazine through his columns and special issues of Vitesta worked a lot for preservation of Kashmiri language and culture so did Late S.N. Bhat Haleem through Koshur samachar. Late Shri A.N. Kaul Sahib installed prizes for children through JKVM for Kashmiri speaking competition which were later on supplemented by Shri B.L. Kaul Deep. Shri Deep has also been active on social media for more than a decade now through his anecdotes on Kashmiri language and culture and about the Koshur Panchang. Dr. Ramesh Razdan a Veterinarian by profession, a committed activist has started an essay competition among children of various age groups in Kashmiri and has installed prizes. Late Dr. Satinder Ganjoo organized many programmes in U.K. related to language and culture. So are there many others who have been working for this important community cause directly or indirectly through social media groups, podcasts, E journals etc.

6. Another important development was the publication of Vaakh the only literary magazine published in standardized Devanagari. This magazine being published

by All India Kashmiri Samaj initiated by Late M.K. Kawas President of the AIKS, was edited by eminent writer and scholar Professor R.L. Shant in its initial years followed by Prof. Omkar Koul who served as the editor for a larger span i.e. till his demise in 2018 and fifty volumes were published during his tenure. Since I was actively involved in the publication of this magazine since its inception therefore the mantle of editorship fell on my shoulders. We have till now brought out 60 volumes of this magazine without any break. However, lately the cold shoulder approach by its publishers, readers and subscribers the future of this magazine is doubtful. For more than two decades Vaakh remained an important platform for the displaced writers and scholars who kept on contributing and sharing their write ups and ideas about various aspects of Kashmiri language, literature and culture . It served as an important organ for promotion of Kashmiri language ,literature and culture among the Kashmiri diasporas outside the valley.

7. Important community Events

Many of our NGO,s organized various events on yearly basis which helped in promotion and preservation of Kashmiri language and culture to a great extent .Some of the popular ones are: gaashitaarukh as part of Shivratri celebrations by Jammu Kashmir Vichar Manch JKVM.It helped shaping up a young generation of Kashmiri speaking singers who became very popular over the years. Shuhul taaph, organized by Kashmir Education, Culture and Science Society, KECSS. Mother Tongue Day celebration by Centre for Kashmiri Language Literature and Culture CKLLC of All India Kashmiri Samaj, We got published and distributed among readers four important books i.e.,Lal Ded's Vaakh, Nunda Rishi's Shruk', Kashmiri cultural Reader and Kaeshriadbaek Gaashi Taarakh (Biographical essays of about fifty eminent Kashmiri writers) Samanbal; A literary and cultural meet by Kashmir Cultural Trust KCT, being organized in Delhi and Jammu for last more than two decades focusing on ways and means of preservation of language and culture among youngsters. Seminars, workshops, readings from literature, musical performances, language speaking competitions, Prof. Omkar Koul memorial lectures etc are the key features of this programme,, Project ZAAAnby Pandit Sabha Mumbai and holding of Kashmiri camps by Kashmir Overseas Association of America KOAUSA.

8. Recently i.e. in 2022 we conceived and produced an audio- video course for learning Kashmiri especially for younger generation of learners entitled "A course in Kashmiri language" which comprises of professionally

made videos of 2 to 3 minutes of duration, uploaded on YouTube. This 2.15 hours of course duration has 42 videos and are also uploaded on Youtube and on the website of Kashmir Cultural Trust, i.e. www.kashmirculturaltrust.in under the sub head Learn Kashmiri .This was made possible by active support and involvement of Dr.Gauri Shankar Raina a well known Media personality and writer and Shri Arvind Shah an academic and social activist.

9.Throughout this long journey of struggle , desperation and uncertainty besides Kashmiri Overseas Association of America KOAUSA there are many other overseas and India based NGOs and Pandit organizations which besides performing their specific activities played important role in promotion and preservation of our language and culture. These are Samprati, Nagradadbisangam, Kashmir Cultural Trust, (KCT), Centre for Kashmiri language Literature and culture of All India Kashmiri Samaj, AIKS, Delhi, Kashmir Education,Culture and Science society (KECSS), Delhi, Jammu andKashmir Vichar Manch (JKVM), Kashmiri Samiti, Delhi KSD, Kashmiri Pandit Association Mumbai, Kashmiri Pandit Association Kolkatta, Kashmiri Pandit Sabha, Jammuetc.

10. One of our veteran Linguists late Prof. Braj B. Kachroo while participating in an academic event in New Delhi in mid nineties of last millennium had predicted that "given the situation Kashmiri Pandits are after displacement from the valley, their mother tongue i.e. Kashmiri will not survive beyond fifty years"outside the valley. Kachru who is well known in the world of English linguistics wrote two important books on Kashmiri Linguistics: "A Reference Grammar of Kashmiri and "An Introduction to Spoken Kashmiri". We are now in the 36th year of our displacement and the prediction seems coming true unless certain urgent measures are taken. We are not only loosing the language but our torch bearers of the mission preservation as well, one after the other.

11. Lately an important development in language technology has been the development of Google translation softwares being used for translating literature from one language to another and Google has already done so for Nastaliq Kashmiri besides many other Indian and world languages. This way both language and literature can be preserved for posterity. When we approached Google they advised us to make the materials available in Unicode first since Akruti is not compatible for Google translation. This is a very

challenging task which requires lot of effort and resources on our part. An important step in this direction was taken recently with an initiative by our well known academic and social activist Shri Arvind Shah by constituting a working group for developing a Devanagari Kashmiri soft ware in Unicode. The core team comprises of Prof. Rattan Lal Shant. Dr. Roop Krishen Bhat, Shri .M,K, Raina, Smt. Rohani Vaishnavi, Smt. Zitni, Mr, Rinku Koul, Shri. Vishal Kachroo besides Shri. Arvind Shah. We have hundreds of books available in Aakruti Devanagri software. Mr. Vishal Kachroo ji who is based in USA and incidentally working in the Google tech itself. He volunteered himself for this job. He consulted the concerned personnel in Google who told him that they would take it up provided there is sizable material of Devanagari Kashmiri available in the Unicode script. Mr Vishal worked tirelessly for few months and came up with the module in Unicode in which he got many samples of Aakruti Kashmiri material written by some scholars transferred successfully. But unfortunately Vishal ran into some undisclosed domestic issues and had to suspend this work. Ever since he is beyond reach. God bless him and his family. That is where we stand at present in this task we were almost a year back wondering the future of this important endeavor.

12. Having taken an over view of this important mission as above and keeping all the circumstances and factors in view and before our community members one thing is very clear that when we started working towards the endeavor of preservation of our mother tongue and culture we had very strong urge and will but no material or means but now when we have all such resources and materials at our disposal unfortunately the will is lost.

Most of our NGO's too are shrinking ,withering away or even in a stage of "learned helplessness" and no more interested in this task. Let us be very frank and rational in accepting the fact that we have not been able to achieve the goal we had set for ourselves and I consider it my personal disgustment and failure because even after devoting most of my last four decades of life into this mission we have not achieved the desired results. I may sound pessimistic or desperate or may be it is a situation of total "burnout" for me, but one thing is sure that the present situation is not at all rosy. Having said all that, I would still like to highlight few measures we can take even at this stage as given below, If at all we are willing to preserve our mother tongue and culture and thereby our identity as a Kashmiri community. I hope there are

takers for this task especially among our youngsters and the Gennext.

1. Link all such web sites which have been developed after great hard work and investment during past several decades and host very precious material on the subject which can help us achieve our objective as and when we desire so . Such web sites are www.kashmirculturaltrust.in, www.mkraina.com, www.ikashmir.net, www.koausa.org etc.

2. Develop the new Kashmiri Devanagari software in Unicode as soon as possible to enable Google translation application for literature written in Devanagari Kashmiri and save the decades of labour and our precious literature and heritage from getting lost.

3. Establish one corner for preservation of language, Literature, culture like print and audio-video libraries, museums, etc. in all the existing Organizations, Sabhas, Trusts, Ashrams etc. which have been constructed all over the globe.

4. Organize audio-video PaathShalas on weekends, virtual meetings, lectures, discussions etc. on voluntarily basis as per local timings and conveniences.

5. Language, Literature and culture be part of every get together, socio-religious function, seminar, conference ,workshop of the community.

6. Organize Kashmiri Musical concerts as many as possible. Music attracts young and old equally and helps preservation of our language and culture to a great extent.

7. Develop the bond of one family one community among entire KP community wherever, they may be living globally.

8. Every Kashmiri household has to take a pledge and make it a habit to use Kashmiri in their home. Parents and Grand parents have to speak routinely with children in Kashmiri.

Good luck and all the best

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Uma Kant Kachru

Standard Devanagari Script for Kashmiri

January 1990 and the aftertime, not only threw a whole race into the unknown and unfriendly terrains, but also opened new issues and topics hitherto considered insignificant or not important. Kashmiri Pandit writers, poets and scholars, while in the valley, were largely progressive and richly contributed to the literature. Many of those, who wrote in Kashmiri language used Nastaliq script as it was the established practice and acceptable to the composite audience of the valley. It, thus, was the de-facto script and all had settled with it without issues. It was also necessitated by the fact that Nastaliq was the officially recognised script for Kashmiri language and also, the majority audience being Muslims knew to read and write in this script. The Kashmiri Pandit scholar fraternity also did not have any issue with the script as they believed that this was a reflection of their progressive outlook.

Post-exile, the scene suddenly changed. Many Kashmiri Pandit writers felt it important to align with their Hindu identity. This brought in many changes, the most important being that the scholar fraternity slowly moved away from Nastaliq and adopted Devanagari for writing in Kashmiri. While they have been using the script it has not been without challenges. A major bottleneck being no standard adopted in the Devanagari script. Each one used one's own way of writing with attempts to bring in the diacritical signs to represent the pronunciation of the typical Kashmiri words. Characteristically being individualistic in nature, it did not occur to anyone to move towards standardizing the Devanagari script. This resulted in many different flavours of the same script. This problem does not appear to have been recent. For Kashmiri, multiple versions of Devanagari script have been created by different linguists and scholars in the last more than a century. Each one has been independent of the other.

It is important to note that as early as 1912 an attempt by Professor Nityanand Shastri resulted in publishing the first ever primer for Kashmiri in Devanagari script followed by the second version in 1914. After publishing

the first primer in Lahore, Professor Nityanand sent a copy to Sir George Grierson in 1912, which was duly acknowledged by the great Indologist with his remarks, "the primer would serve as a good guiding reference for my work in hand on the Kashmiri Dictionary." The first volume of Sir George Grierson's famous work A Dictionary of the Kashmiri Language was published in 1916 - two years after the second volume of the primer was published. A copy of this primer was given by the Professor to one of the scholars of Kashmir who, for some strange reasons, neither used it himself nor made it public. Thus this primer remained with a solitary person for more than six decades. While it is now in possession of Dr Surindar Pandita, the grandson of Professor Nityanand Shastri, it has still not been put to use.

During his tenure as the Secretary in HRD Ministry, Govt. of India, late Shri Maharaj Krishen Kaw took the initiative of creating a standard Devanagari script for Kashmiri by engaging leading linguists and scholars from Kashmir. The ministry set up a committee that would look at various flavours of the script in use and create a standard under the stewardship of the well-known linguist, Dr Roop Krishen Bhat. The committee came up with the standard which they eventually used for creating the software application for its text. Shri M K Raina from Mumbai, who was part of the committee, largely contributed in developing the Devanagari script software called - Arnimal-Akriti. This is a graphics based software which needs to be installed on the computer device to use for writing Kashmiri in Devanagari. Since it is not Unicode based, it limits the porting of any document created using this software to any operating system environment where it appears garbled in absence of the required software. It thus lacks seamless portability of the text created in it to other devices, limiting its use for creating text for publishing and printing books and magazines.

A lot changed since the digital world took center stage. Many linguists created graphic fonts on the computers to

represent the Kashmiri-Devanagari alphabet. Here again, there was no cohesive effort made to standardize the script. This too resulted in several different types of the script. With the Unicode standard becoming important and easy for porting the text across different Operating System (OS) platforms, it became a limitation to the special graphic fonts to be seamlessly ported across other electronic platforms, resulting in having the particular software to be installed for using the script. This, largely restricted the usability and popularity of these linguistic software products.

Last over a decade, technology has seen major enhancements, particularly in the medium of communication across various platforms. It has been leaping in overdrive mode by confronting problems, limitations and usability and working out solutions. The progress sped up too fast with mobile technology revolutionising the communication world. Google created an Open Source operating system - Android which changed the outlook of seamless communication across platforms. Mobiles became powerful technological tools opening vistas of effortless cross-linguistic communication. Today Android based devices have access to multi-lingual keyboards simply by toggling between different scripts easily on the same device.

Google's GBoard is an Android based multi-lingual keyboard that provides a large number of scripts, including Kashmiri in Devanagari. It provides all the diacritical signs for Kashmiri phonetic nuances making it powerful and easy to use for writing Kashmiri in Devanagari. The most important feature of this keyboard is that it is based on the Unicode standard,

making the text readable on any device and Operating System.

In the last over seven years, I have been using Google Kashmiri keyboard for my editing activities of the multilingual community magazines and my experience has been extremely satisfying. Through my experimentation with the graphics based software applications, I soon realised the limitations in them. One can use them for printing books and magazines but the moment the digital version is transported to a different OS device, it is unrecognizable there and shows up as garbled junk. I explored my Android mobile phone's keyboard and enabled the Hindi and Kashmiri keyboards in it and last few years have been digitizing the Hindi and Kashmiri articles and other write-ups using my mobile phone. Lately, I textualised the Devanagari manuscript version of the Kashmiri translation of the famous world classic - Don Quixote done by Professor Nityanand Shastri and Professor JagaddarZadoo on my Android mobile phone which is currently under print and will soon be released. Incidentally, the diacritical signs for Kashmiri used by the two scholars ninety years ago while translating the book are almost the same as provided by GBoard today.

I would like to conclude this article by my sincere suggestion to our Kashmiri writers and scholars to explore the Android based GBoard which, if they are using Android phones or tablets, is available on the device. Its ease of use and transporting capability of the work across all digital platforms provides a powerful medium of reaching the work digitally anywhere in the world. Besides, it provides the automatic mechanism of standard to the Devanagari script for Kashmiri.



"This acrylic painting celebrates the Kangri, Kashmir's traditional fire pot. Using earthy tones and layered textures, it highlights the vessel's intricate wickerwork against a cool winter backdrop. The artwork elevates this humble object into a cultural symbol of resilience, intimacy, and the enduring warmth of Kashmiri life".

Artist : Sanyukta Sadhu



Dr. Raj Kaw

Kashmir: Tradition, Culture and Society

Tradition is the handing down of information, beliefs or customs from one generation to another. Tradition can strengthen the family bonds, offer comfort, security, and teach values to our kids.

Tradition an inherited, established or customary pattern of thoughts, action or behaviour, it ensures continuity of its culture. Culture has been called the way of life of an entire society as it includes codes of manners, dress, religion, language, rituals, art, civilization and cultural upbringing. Society a community, nation, broad grouping of people having common tradition, institutions, collective activities, interests, sharing cultural aspects, dress and artistic form. So, culture, tradition, and society are linked through sharing rituals, ceremonies, shared food and shared values. It provides opportunity for people to learn and celebrate values of their community.

The women poetess Lal Ded (14th century) Habba Khatun (16th century) Arnimal (18th century) expressed their sorrow, pathos, grief philosophy through their genius poetic composition.

Lalleshwari was expressed no-dual philosophy in simple, easy to comprehend local languages. It is grounded in the concept of Reshiyat.

Lal Ded's contribution to our culture is immense. It was to make an easy understanding of Shaivism by the common man through her songs and sayings, means tenets of Shaivism. It is a philosophy which aims at transcending the illusion of the external world and restricting one's thoughts to meditation on one's inner self. She like a true yogi transcended even the barriers of cast creed and religious bigotry which influenced

Kashmiri Muslims and Hindus alike. Lal Ded was an iconoclast, she lashed out at the fundamentalists of all religions and declared the universality of spiritual truth. Lalleshwari is considered to be the architect of the Kashmiri linguistic expressions. Her poetry shows how a language conveys the most complex and intricate truth of mystic experience. The phrases that Lal Ded coined have passed into the language.

There is a strong belief that Adi Shankaracharya held philosophic discussion with Mandana Mishra and his wife Uday Bharti, this shows that women in Kashmir studied the Vedas, were treated as authorities and had intellectual prowess that even Shankaracharya couldn't match, even Ramanuja, the doyen of Vaishnav creed travelled from Madras to Kashmir to argue Shaivite Philosopher.

Kashmiri Shaivism has Matruchakra, the theory of alphabets. The sixteen vowels represent the Shiva Tattva and thirty-five consonants represents Shakti Tattva.

Kashmiri Language- Coming to the language, is the mirror of society. Kashmiri language born of Vedic language, that was spoken by sage Kashyapa and others should be considered sacred for us. It is the mother-tongue that binds the group of people whatever be the economic disparity. Tongue ties minds and spoken words signifies a unity deeper than any other things in life. It has appeal to one's heart, sentiments and impulses, one can express feelings sentiments and aspirations.

In Kashmiri language one finds proverbs, riddles, folktales, love songs mystical composition which forms

precious heritage of Kashmir. There are many theories about the origin of language. Some says originated from a sub-group of Dardic Indo Aryan language, some says originated from Sanskrit, some says in the form of engravings in Brahmi. The Sharda script is direct descendent of Brahmi. Another belief Kashmiri language has sprouted from the Jewish language Hibru. Al Biruni is a major source of Medieval Indian History says in Kitaabul Hind the most generally known alphabet is called Siddha Matrika. It is also known as Siddam or Sharda.

The first Kashmiri works like Shitikanths, Mahaanai Prakash (12th century), Vakh of Lalded (14th century), Sukh Dukh charita of Battavir (15th pcentury) were all written in Sharda. Shrukus of Nund Rishi used to be recorded daily in Sharda script by Kati Pandit. A Sanskrit text of legal documentation, hundies etc which remained in use in Kashmir till the late Mughal rule was also written in Sharda script. Sharda and Persian languages become the vehicle of communication besides Sanskrit language. But, unfortunately our mother tongue Kashmiri is disappearing as a binding force. The mother tongue echoes in our households in the most senior age group only. Kashmiri authors have made tremendous contribution to many languages, have enriched urdu, persian, sanskrit but we have failed to enrich our own language. This is most ironical. Now recently Mr. Toshkhani, Rattan Lal Shant, Roop Krishan Bhat, Hari Krishan Koul and so many scholars are writing in our language.

Kashmir is known for its natural beauty, cuisine, and music art. Music is an arrangement of sounds having melody, rhythm and harmony. The prominent instruments played are Santoor, Sitar, Noat, and Tubaknari.

Every musical instrument has its own interpretation and historical background. In the field of music Kashmiri Pandit ladies have the proud privilege of preserving a tradition of singing known as Vanuvon that has remained unchanged through the millenines since the time of Samaveda.

It is done on the occasion of marriage. Another living

tradition is that of Vatsun which is song composed generally on a romantic theme, sung on Manzirat, many of which end in lolo. The language is now mixture of Kashmiri, Hindi and English and verses abound in humour, sarcasm and satire.

सज़करीकूरी सज़करीकूरी
वरियछुयगच्छुन, त्राविकूरिखानमाजर
दानसछुययपियुन

The Bhakti tradition has been kept alive by the Lila's and Bajans. The traditional dance survives to this day. The main dance Rouf and Banda Pather; Rouf's dance that is entirely done by the ladies. Muslim women used to come at the time of wedding to perform Rouf.

कदलसतुरमहाराज, आबसगवगूरू
असिदुपरंगबुलबुलमाआव

At the time bridegroom leaving with Barat and at Yagnapavit ceremony Hindu ladies do the dance on the Vyog.

हरेवेच्छुमनविनेय, तंसेरसुनसज़ये
हारीगुल्लमचंदनहार, सुतिसुनसज़ये

Band Pather is performed in the villages and is all male affair. ***Kashmiri language, literature, music as seems the influences of changes as from time to time. New words columns and phrases are adopted as such Koshur the language is relevant and rich in present day scenario. Koshur language is written in both Perso-Arabic as well as Devnagari scripts. Bitter Devnagari Script is not get approved by government. It is very important the Devnagari script is also adopted as a co-script for Kashmiri Language.***

So Kashmiri Pandits are rich in culture, art, music festivals and intellectuals. Kashmiri Pandits have a place of pride in the long and chequered history of India. They have not only withstood the strains and stresses of time and man, but has been lot somewhat like the Jews, yet despite several calamities they have emerged stronger as a community.

The exemplary courage and determination shown by them is indeed an eloquent commentary on their character, merit and qualities of head and heart.



Dr. Ram K Ganjoo

Cancer Unveiled: Understanding the Basics

The mention of 'cancer' often brings fear.
But understanding it brings power.

Today cancer touches nearly every family, shapes public-health priorities, and strains healthcare systems across the world. According to global data from 2022, more than 20 million people were diagnosed with cancer, and nearly 9.7 million lives were lost. It is now the second leading cause of death worldwide, and its social and economic impact continues to grow.

Asia contributes to about a quarter of global cases, and India alone recorded 1.46 million new cases in 2022, with projections of a 12.8% increase by 2025. With one in nine Indians at risk of developing cancer during their lifetime, awareness and early action have never been more important. This article aims to demystify cancer — what it is, why it develops, how to detect it early, what are the warning signs to look for and what modern medicine is doing to treat it more effectively.

What Exactly Is Cancer?

Our bodies are made up of trillions of cells. Normally, these cells grow, divide, and die in a highly organized, controlled manner—a process that includes **programmed cell death** (medically known as apoptosis). **Cancer begins when this controlled process breaks down.** Instead of stopping, some cells start to **grow uncontrollably.** These abnormal cells can form a mass called a tumour, which can be:

Benign: Non-cancerous and usually not harmful. **Malignant/Cancerous.** These tumors can invade surrounding tissues and spread to distant organs through the bloodstream or lymphatic system—a process called metastasis.

At its core, cancer is a **genetic disease.** It's caused by changes, or mutations, in the genes that tell a cell how to function. While some mutations are inherited, most are acquired during a person's lifetime. This can be due to simple errors in cell division or exposure to things like tobacco smoke, UV radiation, or certain chemicals. As we

age, our body's ability to fix this DNA damage lessens, which is why older adults have a higher risk.

Cancer cells behave very differently from normal cells. They grow without the body's control, ignore signals to stop dividing or die (**apoptosis**), and create new blood vessels (**angiogenesis**) to supply themselves with nutrients. They can also hide from or confuse the immune system and even manipulate nearby immune cells to protect themselves.

There are over 100 types of cancer, but most fall into a few main groups. Carcinomas are the most common and begin in the skin or the lining of internal organs such as the lungs, breasts, prostate, or digestive tract. Sarcomas develop in bones, muscles, or other connective tissues. Blood cancers include leukaemias, lymphomas, and multiple myeloma.

Not all cancers show early symptoms, but certain warning signs are important to recognize. General symptoms may include unexplained weight loss or extreme fatigue. **Lung cancer** may cause a persistent cough, blood in sputum, chest pain, or breathlessness. **Breast cancer** can present as a lump in the breast or armpit, skin changes, or nipple discharge or retraction. **Digestive system** cancers may cause persistent indigestion, blood in vomit or black stools, changes in bowel habits, or abdominal swelling. **Cervical cancer** may lead to abnormal vaginal bleeding, unusual discharge, or pain during intercourse.

Taking Charge: Prevention and Early Action

Many cancers are linked to our daily choices, meaning **prevention is often in our hands.**

Prevention & Lifestyle changes

- **Say No to Tobacco:** No smoking or using any tobacco products.
- **Eat Well:** Have a healthy, balanced diet rich in fibre, and limit refined sugar and processed foods.

- **Stay Active:** Maintain a healthy weight and get regular physical activity.
- **Avoid** refined sugars and foods containing preservatives Limit Alcohol.
- **Get Vaccinated:** Vaccinations against HPV and Hepatitis B can protect against certain cancer
- **Screening Saves Lives: Screening detects cancer at its earliest, most treatable stage.** Talk to your doctor about recommended screenings.

Detailed Screening Guide: Your Plan for Early Detection

Screening means looking for cancer or pre-cancerous conditions **before** you have any symptoms. The goal is to catch it early when it is easiest to treat and often curable.

The following recommendations are for people at average risk. If you have a strong family history or known genetic risk (like a BRCA gene mutation), you should talk to your doctor about starting screening earlier or getting screened more frequently.

For Women: Breast and Cervical Cancer

The Screening test for breast cancer is a Mammogram (a low dose breast X Ray)

Age to Start

- Age 40 (Option to start)
- Age 45 (Recommended to start annual screening)
- Annually (every year) until age 55. After 55, you can switch to every two years or continue annually.
- Regular mammograms dramatically reduce the risk of dying from breast cancer. If you are at a higher risk, your doctor may recommend an MRI as well.

Cervical Cancer

- HPV Test (Primary Test) and Pap Test (Pap Smear)
- Age 25 (Preferred start age for the HPV test). Age 21 (If only a Pap test is used).
- Every 5 years if you get the primary HPV test.
- Every 3 years if you get the Pap test alone.
- Cervical cancer is highly preventable and curable because screening finds pre-cancerous cells caused by the Human Papillomavirus (HPV).
- Screening can typically stop after age 65 if your recent tests have been consistently negative. |

For Men: Lung Cancer and Prostate Cancer

Lung Cancer (for Heavy Smokers)

This screening is only for people at high risk due to their smoking history.

- **Test:** Low-Dose Computed Tomography (LDCT), which is a quick, low-radiation chest scan.
- **Who Qualifies?** People aged **50 to 80** who have a history of heavy smoking (defined as a **20 pack-year** history, which is 1 pack a day for 20 years or 2 packs a day for 10 years) **and** currently smoke or quit within the last 15 years.
- **How Often: Annually** (every year).

Prostate Cancer Prostate cancer screening involves a discussion with your doctor, as the benefits of early detection must be weighed against the potential risks of over-treatment (treating a slow-growing cancer that may never cause harm).

- **Age to Start Discussion: Age 50** for men at average risk.
- **High-Risk Start Age: Age 45** for Black men or men with a father or brother diagnosed with prostate cancer before age 65.
- **The Test: A PSA test** (Prostate-Specific Antigen, a blood test) often with a Digital Rectal Exam (DRE).
- **How Often:** If screening is chosen, it's typically every **1 to 4 years**, depending on your initial PSA level.

For everyone, colorectal cancer screening is very important. **Colorectal cancer**, which affects the colon and rectum, is the third most common cancer, but it can be detected early and treated effectively through regular screening.

Screening usually starts at age 45, as newer guidelines have lowered the starting age from 50. The preferred screening test is a colonoscopy, but stool-based tests such as FIT or gFOBT are also options. **A colonoscopy is recommended every 10 years, while stool-based tests should be done every year.**

A colonoscopy is considered the gold standard because it can find and remove polyps, which are pre-cancerous growths, before they turn into cancer. If a stool-based test shows a positive result, a follow-up colonoscopy is required.

Remember the Body Awareness Principle

Regardless of your age or risk level, the single most important tool is knowing your own body. Report any persistent or unusual changes to your doctor right away, such as: a new lump or swelling, unexplained weight loss, ongoing changes in bathroom habits, or non-healing sores or moles that change color/size/shape.

Modern Treatment Strategies

Traditional treatments like **surgery, radiation therapy, and chemotherapy** are still widely used. However, modern medicine has brought about significant advances:

- **Targeted Therapy:** These are **precision medicines** that attack the specific genetic mutations within the cancer cells, leaving healthy cells alone as much as possible. Examples include Imatinib for Chronic Myeloid Leukemia (CML) and Trastuzumab for HER2+ breast cancer.
- **Immunotherapy:** This approach works by **empowering the body's own immune system** to recognize and destroy cancer cells. Examples include checkpoint inhibitors and CAR-T cell therapy.

Stem Cell Transplant: A System Reset

A stem cell transplant (sometimes called a bone marrow transplant) **is most commonly used to treat blood cancers** (like Leukaemia, Lymphoma, and Myeloma). The process involves destroying the patient's diseased bone marrow—the factory for blood and immune cells—using high doses of chemotherapy or radiation. Afterward, healthy blood-forming stem cells (either from the patient, a sibling, or an unrelated donor) are given to the patient intravenously, allowing the bone marrow to regenerate a healthy blood and immune system.

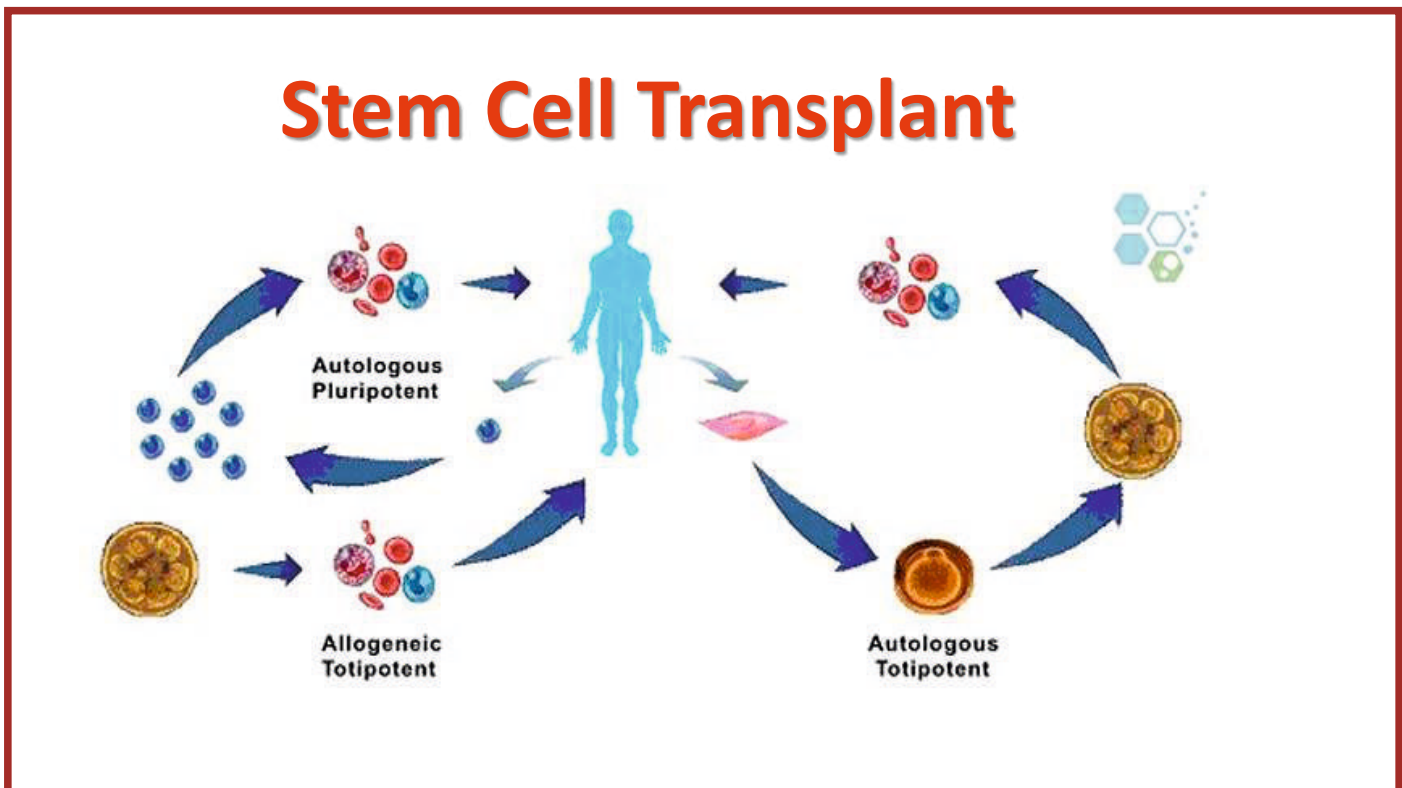
A Growing Hope: The Future of Cancer Care

The future of cancer care is exciting and is being shaped by new technologies that promise earlier detection and highly personalized treatment.

Liquid biopsy is a simple, non-invasive blood test that looks for tiny pieces of genetic material released by tumor cells into the bloodstream. It is often called a “molecular magnifying glass.” It detects circulating tumor DNA and other cancer-related materials. This test can help screen for cancer earlier than traditional imaging, monitor how well treatment is working in real time, and detect if cancer has returned, all without needing a painful tissue biopsy.

Artificial intelligence is becoming an important tool in cancer care by helping doctors process large amounts of data much faster than humans can. In diagnosis, AI can analyze imaging scans such as mammograms, CT scans, MRIs, and pathology slides very quickly, helping doctors find small cancers or abnormal patterns that might otherwise be missed. In treatment planning, AI can study a patient's genetic profile, predict how well a specific drug may work, and suggest the most personalized combination of treatments to improve outcomes.

Cancer is still a complex disease, but these scientific and technological advances offer great hope. By focusing on early detection, making healthy lifestyle choices, and supporting scientific research, we are moving toward a future where cancer is more manageable and often curable.





Dr. Sunil Kaul

A timeless antidote to anxiety, stress and depression by chanting “Mantras”

Mental health concerns such as anxiety, stress, depression have become pervasive in contemporary society affecting individuals across age groups as a leading cause of disability worldwide, and the global prevalence of anxiety disorders continue to rise alarmingly.

While pharmacological and psychotherapeutic interventions remain main stage of management.

There is increasing recognition of the role of complimentary and integrative therapies in promoting psychological resilience.

Among these the practice of Mantra chanting - A centuries old spiritual tradition in India has drawn scientific interest for its potential neuropsychological benefits mantra as medicine.

The Sanskrit term "Mantra" derives from "Man (Mind) & TRA (Tool or instrument implying as instrument to train or liberate the mind)".

In Morden neuroscientific terms *chanting may modulate neural circuits involved in attention, emotion regulation and self-referential processing.*

Mantra chanting induces a parasympathetic response, slowing respiration, Lowering heart rate and stabilising blood pressure.

The rhythmic breathing and auditory vibrational feedback promote coherence between mind and body.

Integrating chanting in to Holistic Health Practice.



Mantra chanting offers several advantages:

It is non-invasive, Inexpensive, culturally adaptable and requires no special equipment's.

As a form of sound based mind fullness, it can easily be incorporated in to community health programmes, workplace wellness initiatives and medical education to promote stress resilience.

It is time that healthcare professionals and policy makers recognise chanting not nearly as a ritual but as a science of resonance with demonstrable therapeutic potential.

Dr. Sunil Kaul
MBBS, MBA (Healthcare Admn.)
Health care consultant



Ashok Kaul

The Trouble with Too Much Certainty

Once my brother suggested me that I try having one of my pieces edited through artificial intelligence. I agreed more out of curiosity than conviction, my scepticism intact. When the edited version arrived, I was struck by its clarity. The argument remained unchanged, the ideas unmistakably mine, yet the language moved with a fluency that surprised me. Sentences no longer obstructed the thought they carried. They appeared to serve it. The experience was undeniably pleasing. Yet it also produced a deeper unease.

That unease does not arise from the technology itself, but from what it may foreshadow. Artificial intelligence has the potential to concentrate power in ways that delink consciousness from action, intention from responsibility, and agency from accountability. If such a trajectory unfolds, one must ask what would remain of human life half a century from now, particularly if accountability itself risks becoming obsolete. A world in which decisions are executed without moral authorship may be technologically sophisticated, but it would be ethically hollowed out.

This anxiety acquires a more disturbing dimension when placed alongside religious assurances of life after death. Death has historically been rendered bearable through faith. Life, by contrast, has drawn its meaning from uncertainty, struggle, and moral choice. If technology were ever to predict or disclose what lies beyond death, belief would cease to be an existential commitment and become a matter of informational certainty. Such certainty would not deepen faith. It would erode it. Faith deprived of mystery collapses easily into fear, resentment, or instrumental obedience rather than ethical self-restraint.

At this point, Kashmiri Saivism offers a counter intuition to both technological determinism and doctrinal finality. In its non-dual vision, consciousness is not a passive spectator awaiting judgment but the

very ground of reality itself. What binds the human to the ultimate is not an external verdict but pratyabhijña, recognition, the gradual awakening to one's own participation in the universal consciousness of Siva. Moral life here does not culminate in a terminal reckoning. It unfolds as a deepening awareness of responsibility that is intrinsic rather than imposed. Certainty, in this tradition, is not informational closure but experiential insight, never final, always incomplete, always demanding ethical vigilance.

Ignorance is often described as bliss, yet only within limits. When ignorance is deliberately preserved, or technologically managed, to sustain belief, it mutates into vulnerability. The disclosure of ultimate truths through technical means would not liberate humanity. It would expose it to new forms of domination. Violence, both symbolic and physical, would likely intensify as individuals and communities attempt to compensate for a growing sense of inferiority and loss of meaning born of the realization that even transcendence has been colonized by calculation.

Here again, Kashmiri Saivism resists both domination and surrender. Its doctrine of svatantrya, the radical freedom of consciousness, insists that agency cannot be outsourced, whether to institutions, machines, or metaphysical authorities. To be human is to participate in this freedom through action, reflection, and restraint. Accountability, in this view, is not a ledger maintained elsewhere but the inescapable resonance of one's own acts within the field of consciousness itself.

The contemporary world already offers a warning. Despite unprecedented technological expansion and globalization, religions have not grown more humane or pluralistic.

Many have instead become rigid, defensive, and

intolerant. This suggests that technology does not dissolve existential anxiety. It amplifies it. When consciousness is reduced to performance, efficiency, and algorithmic output, moral imagination withers. What follows is not the enrichment of life but its thinning.

Yet history also offers a countervailing force. The erosion of consciousness is neither total nor irreversible so long as creativity remains alive. Fundamental sciences may continue to generate powerful technologies, but it is the creative and liberal arts that have historically mitigated human anxiety by restoring irony, ambiguity, and moral distance. Literature, particularly traditions such as Urdu poetry, has long unsettled moral certitudes by mocking the preacher, the judge, and the custodian of faith. Through wit, metaphor, and irony, it has rendered dogmatic accountability fragile, preserving a space for conscience beyond doctrine and calculation.

In the idiom of Kashmiri Saivism, this creative vitality may be understood as *spanda*, the subtle vibration of consciousness through which reality continually recreates itself. Art, poetry, and reflection are not ornamental to life. They are expressions of this inner movement. What technology risks freezing into fixed outputs, creativity reopens as living process. Where algorithm seeks finality, *spanda* restores becoming.

Creativity and genius operate in registers that exceed algorithmic predictability. They draw upon contradiction, silence, excess, and irony, dimensions that resist formalization.

Artificial intelligence may outpace human cognition in speed and scale, but it cannot substitute the moral imagination that sustains solidarity. Without consciousness anchored in ethical responsibility, society loses its human substance.

The death of consciousness thus becomes indistinguishable from the death of life, not biologically, but sociologically and morally.

The contemporary human condition differs sharply from that of earlier epochs. People no longer live primarily for the promise of the next world. They struggle for dignity, recognition, and security in this one.

What sustains them is not certainty, but a fragile hope of



solidarity. Confessional religion still offers a shared moral language and a sense of belonging. Yet as technology relentlessly advances goal rationality, metrics, outcomes, and efficiency, the language of public life shifts. Accountability risks becoming procedural rather than moral, enforced through systems rather than conscience.

What unsettles me most, then, is not artificial intelligence as a tool, but what it reveals. It exposes a longstanding gap between thinking and expression, between intellectual labour and its uncertain public afterlife.

For years, I assumed this gap was personal and inevitable. Technology suggests otherwise. Ideas do not travel on their own. They require language, structure, and confidence. When these are absent, even careful thought remains confined.

The ethical challenge before us, therefore, is not to resist such technologies outright, but to learn how to inhabit them without surrendering depth, responsibility, or judgment. What is at stake is not authenticity, as is often claimed, but our discomfort with uncertainty. Uncertainty unsettles authority, belief, and knowledge. It demands responsibility without guarantees.

Kashmiri Saivism names this condition with remarkable clarity. Since consciousness is both the ground of freedom and the site of delusion, the human task is neither obedience to a final code nor escape from the world, but recognition within it.

Ethics is not secured by certainty but sustained by awareness. Responsibility, in this sense, is not an external demand but an ontological condition of being.



Ravinder Ravi

The Unique Kashmiri Trika Philosophy

"Kashmir can claim the distinction of being the only region of India which possesses an un-interrupted series of written records of history."

Kashmir is perhaps the only place on earth which has got its own philosophy. This original philosophy was born in the land of pious Nagas, the ancient and native aborigines of Kashmir. Trika Philosophy as it is known in the blessed land of Kashmir dates back to Indus valley civilization, when it had strengthened its roots well and had spread across the length and breadth of the whole region. Down through the ages the esoteric doctrine created a niche in every one's hearts who admired Shiva the all-pervading and the mightiest power beyond comprehension. Cutting across religious lines and narrow considerations Kashmiri Shiva Darshan continues to inspire aspirants of knowledge and wisdom. The native Nagas of Kashmir would worship Shiva, their deity and had profound belief in his existence. They never worshiped any other God except Shiva the creator of this universe. Blessed with divine energy and super natural insight, these Nagas never ever disturbed or harassed anybody, instead thrived on peaceful co-existence and unity in diversity. As per their belief Shiva resided in Mount Kailasha, the ultimate abode of Shankara, the fountainhead of power and light.

According to The Nilamata Purana by Dr. Ved Kumara, "That Siva was worshipped in early Kasmira is beyond any doubt. The Mahabharata states specifically that Siva and Uma may be propitiated in Kasmira at the lake Vatika sanda. Kalhana's Rajatarangini contains innumerable references to Siva and Siva-images erected by kings, ministers and other people of Kasmira. (page 168)" On page 160, Dr. Ved Kumari states, "His association with the Bhutas, the Pisacas and the Raksasas further indicate his wild character. Yoga and austerities- specially associated with Siva- were, according to Frazer, adopted in great part from the aboriginal tribes. The Yogic asana of Siva Pasupati and the Yogic eyes of other figures unearthed at Mohenjodaro and Harappa, support this view. The Nilamata refers to Siva as a member of the triad of deities and describes his three forms creating, protecting and destroying the world."

Trika, consisting of Shiva, Shakti and Jeeva has a unique

identity. It is an open, wide and limitless sea and a drop of water from the ocean has separated. This drop of water, although acquiring a distinct character becomes restless but identifies itself as an inalienable part of the open and wide sea. This restlessness and separation comes to an end when it finds its way back into the ocean. To attain supreme and eternal reality, this Trika system of philosophy lays stress on complete self-realization. After having recognized the fact that "who am I" only then a way towards the ultimate reality starts opening up. In this philosophy every creation even a particle or an atom is the manifestation of Shiva and this manifestation is Shakti. Shiva and Shakti are akin to each other. Both of them are one and are fundamental and can't be separated. Every thing that is seen around is the power of Shakti and in true sense this "Maya" is not some illusion or a false idea but a reality and these prevailing situations actually exist. In simple words when Great Shiva is an ultimate reality, obviously his creations are also a reality.

Shri S. P. Sharma dwells on Kashmir Shaivism, "An examination of the Trika system of philosophy may well begin with a study of the important concept of Atman. It is the true and immanent self in all beings, a changeless reality, a purely experiencing principle. It is known by several names, as chaitanya, Parameswara, Paramashiva, etc. It lies at the root of everything in the world and is one and the same in all beings undivided, indivisible and unlimited in time space and form. Though it is immanent in creation, it is also transcendental for it has no limits."

According to Giyan Yog in Shiva Shastra, Atman itself is Parmeswara and pervades in Jeeva too and whatever he does or performs, all these actions go directly to Atma Dev, the omniscient. Thus it is the complete surrender before the Parmeswara. It is Parmeswara who can liberate Zeeva from the shackles of the world. The kindness, Shiva shows on Zeeva is called Shaktipaata, which is showered upon in innumerable ways. Instructors and preachers of Shaivism reiterate that it is

so simple to have access to Shiva provided there is purity in heart and true devotion . A disciple can find him easily if there is indeed a burning desire, irrespective of caste, color, creed .

Great Shiva Shastra Philosophers, including Vasugupt, Acharya Somanand, Utpal Dev and Abhinavgupt nourished this Shiva Philosophy and took it to new heights . During 9th and 10th century A D, these esoteric doctrines reached the zenith, glorifying and magnifying the tenets of this celebrated knowledge. It is said that Vasugupt found Shiva Sutras in Harwan on mount Mahadev inscribed on a large rock. This rock is known as "Shankar Pal" (Boulder) in Kashmiri and is reverential to every Kashmiri Pandit who throngs to this sacred site of revelation of Shiva Sutras on auspicious occasions. Thus, Vasugupt got these Shiva Sutras to the fore and made them public. Therefore the solid foundation of the Shiva Philosophy is firmly based on these Sutras. Philosophers interpreted these Sutras in different forms. As a result, three different schools of thought came into being. For example, Agama Shastra, Supanda Shastra and Pratyabigna Shastra. Out of these three Shastras, Pratyabigna has a special significance. About Agama Shastra, it is said that this Shastra is not a human creation but celestial. Its existence is eternal and immemorial.

Agama Shastra:- Since the name Agama itself suggests arrival, this shastra ,it is said , has not been written by anybody and is self created. Some say that these Agama Shastras were in oblivion for a long time but were rediscovered and resurrected by the then Rishis. This Shastra says that Atma (Soul) is consciousness. Atma is Shiva the supreme being and Shiva is all pervading , omniscient and omnipresent.

Supanda Shastra:- Supanda is a pulsation that ultimately leads to realization of energy, that is super consciousness. The main theme of Supanda Shastra is that Shiva is great being. Energy is Shiva's Supand and this energy creates whole universe . Thirty six(36) elements in Shiva Philosophy are made from Supanda. Supanda is manifested in different objects of this universe. Supanda is the energy of consciousness ,this energy gives life to physical senses. Without this energy life is useless and motionless. This whole world is the manifestation of Supanda. Soul is in fact Param Shiva,the supreme being. Soul being the supreme existence reflects its state of consciousness. This state of consciousness is its Supanda (pulsation). Soul is always sovereign, sovereignty is its quality and pure consciousness is Atma, Param Shiva, Param Brahm and Bhagwan etc. It is also scientific and denotes speed too. Supanda denotes speeding with pulsation. Everything in this universe is a result of a continuous process and we

all are a ray of this great energy that is Param Shiva.

Pratyabigna Shastra:- Pratyabigna Shastra is the proper philosophy of Kashmiri Trika Shastra.The word Pratyabigna is a feeling of understanding who I am? It is a feeling of self assessment ; what kind of qualities do I possess ? Nothing is impossible for me after coming to this world. I am Param Shiva, the supreme being . I possess the same qualities as possessed by the supreme consciousness itself. Self identification is the bedrock of this philosophy . A man is bestowed with a flame inside him but that flame has dimmed; rekindling that flame is the essence of the Pratyabigna Shastra.

It is worth mentioning that there is a commonality in these three Shastras. All these three Shastras accept the one and only ultimate reality that is Param Shiva. We derive ideas of monism from these above mentioned Shastras.

This Trika Shaster attaches great importance to meditation. Meditation is core aspect in realizing Param Shiva. Mind is focused and freed from uncontrolled thoughts. This spiritual exercise leads a devotee to a point where he comes across with the ultimate reality and attains realization. During this meditation, focus is kept on controlling breath . An individual does not get distracted by worldly things and concentrates only on meditation . This exercise not only enlightens an individual but also helps him in making his nervous system stronger . His internal irritants are removed and he attains perennial peace and tranquility. Worldly sufferings also do not harm such a devotee in any way.

This celebrated Trika Philosophy is the bedrock of our great Kashmiri culture, ethos and civilization and also reflects our unique identity. By virtue of this indigenous philosophy, the Kashmiri Shaivism continues to remain even more relevant today. Down through the ages this epic doctrine has risen to the highest pinnacle, and its relevance is evident from the very fact that even today, not only Indian Scholars and Researchers but connoisseurs worldwide swarm up to reach the zenith where they see Shiva and his consort in eternal embrace.

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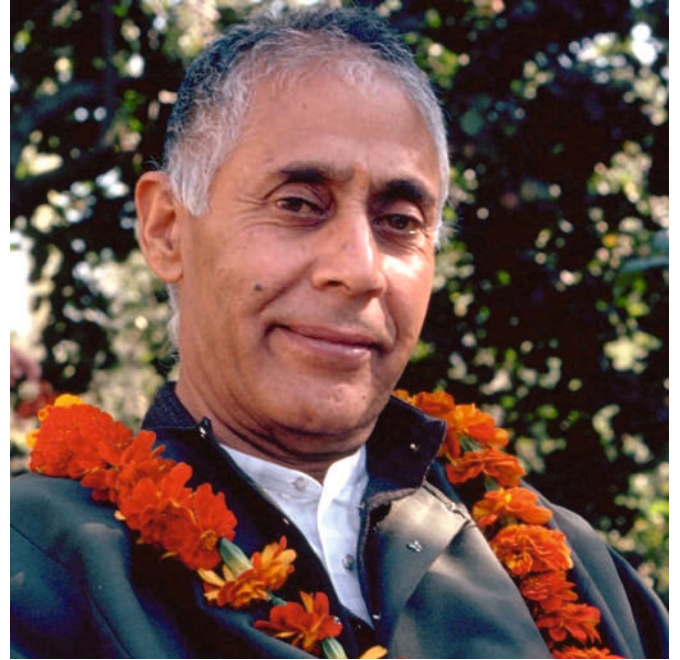
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C. L. Kaul

From Materialistic World to Spiritual World through Kashmir Shaivism

From the inception of this universe, human societies have faced fundamental queries regarding human existence, universe and its mysteries. From the beginning mankind has been searching answers to the basic queries of life which pertain to the nature of the Reality, God or Creator; the nature and reason for manifestation of the universe; the nature of sustenance of the universe; the existence of the individual being; the ultimate purpose of life and the relationship of the individual being with the God, the source and the environment around the individual being. From time to time saints, seers and spiritually elevated people delved deep into these thoughts and provided answers. In due course of time, this effort led to creation of various schools of thought. In ancient India the effort led to the rise of schools of Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, etc. In case of Hinduism, the effort led to the growth of Vedic schools of thought and schools of Shaivism and Vaishnavism. In case of Vedic schools, the effort led to six schools of thought, called Sad-darshanas ('Shad' meaning 'six' and 'Darshana' a Sanskrit word meaning 'near equivalent of philosophy'), which include schools of Sankhya, Yoga, Nyaya, Vaisheshika, Purva-mimasa and Uttara-mimamsa or Advaita Vedanta. In case of Shaivism, there arose seven schools of thought, namely, schools of Pashupata Shaivism, Lakulisha Pashupata Shaivism, Siddanta Shaiva Dualism, Shaiva Vishishtadvaita, Vira Shaivism, Nandikeshvara Shaivism and Raseshvara Shaivism. In 9th century Trika philosophy was re-introduced as a refined school of thought. This school of thought, known as Trika Shastra, existed since inception but its principles had got diluted over a period. So, this philosophy was re-interpreted and re-introduced in 9th century with a new focus on the concept of Unity (Advaita). It is this thought which much later (in 20th century) gained popularity as Kashmir Shaivism. The Shaiva Masters of this thought provided satisfactory answers to the basic queries of life through reasoning and logic.



An insight into various schools of thought shows that most of these schools provided answers, which satisfied the seekers to a great extent but not fully. Masters of Trika philosophy also provided answers, which in comparison, unfolded the mysteries of nature through reasoning and logic. This is how Shaiva Masters addressed these queries:

1. Who created this universe?

According to Trika philosophy there is only one Truth and that Truth, called Lord Shiva. Shaivites call this truth 'Paramashiva'. According to Shaivites, this universe is created by Paramashiva, who is the creator, the sustainer and the destroyer. He is everywhere in everything. There is nothing above or beyond Him. He has unlimited Powers (Shaktis), five out of which are considered as paramount. These Shaktis are Chit Shakti (Consciousness), Ananda Shakti (Bliss), Ichha Shakti (Will), Gyana Shakti (Knowledge) and Kriya Shakti (Act). Further, Paramashiva has also five unlimited



Kriya Shaktis, called the acts of 'His Divine Play'. These are: Srishti (Creation), Sthiti (Sustenance), Samhaara (Dissolution), Tirodhana (Concealing) and Anugraha (Revealing).

2. How was this universe created?

Creation of this universe is one of the paramount Kriya Shaktis of Paramashiva. According to Trika philosophy, this universe is manifested by Paramashiva through 36 Tattvas, with Purusha (individual) as the 12th Tattva and Prakriti (Nature) as the 13th Tattva. Further, Srishti is the expansion of Shiva and both the cause (Shiva) and effect (Srishti) are one. This means that Shiva creates the world out of Himself or Shiva Himself is the world. Whatever happens within us or around us is due to 'His Divine Play'.

3. Who am I?

According to Trika philosophy Jiva is Shiva. This comes from the dictum 'Shivo'ham' meaning 'I am Shiva'. In this concept 'Jiva' or 'I' represents 'Shiva', which means that there is no difference between Jiva (the individual self) and Shiva (the Universal Self). This state is called the state of Unity or the state of Jnana (True knowledge). In this concept, each one of us is Shiva and hence is divine. But then we find ourselves in a state which is far from divinity. According to Trika philosophy, there is a reason for this. Paramashiva, as an act of 'His Divine Play', desires to recognize His own nature through the act of manifestation. For this, He first becomes ignorant about it by enveloping His own nature with Maya (6th Tattva) and its evolutes or Kanchukas (7-11th Tattvas). With this starts a sequence of events. Because of Maya differentiation takes place, Paramashiva assumes different form, becomes forgetful and manifests as Jiva or Purusha (12th Tattva). This Jiva is actually Shiva but with limited Shaktis. So, He is in a state of forgetfulness, known as state of Ajnana (i.e. not knowing that I am Shiva). This act is called Tirodhana – a state in which Paramashiva conceals Himself and manifests as Jiva.

4. What is the purpose of my life?

Most schools of thought say that the purpose of life, in general, is to attain liberation or freedom (Moksha) from the cycle of birth and death. Trika philosophy interprets this as attaining the state of Unity i.e. moving from the state of Duality (Dvaita) to the state of Unity (Advaita). In this philosophy, so long as Paramashiva is veiled with Maya, Jiva remains in the state of forgetfulness. No change can take place and change is possible only when Jiva, for some reason, becomes aware of the true nature of the self and tries to regain that nature. Thereafter, regaining the true nature becomes the sole purpose of life, which according to Trika philosophy is to recognize the true nature of the self. And, to regain back the true nature, Jiva performs various spiritual practices (Upayas) and with sincere efforts, the inevitable happens. This act of 'His Divine Play' is called Anugraha (revealing). So, it is through the act of Anugraha that Paramashiva reveals Himself and the Jiva recognises his true nature.

5. What is my relationship with the creator?

In Trika philosophy, the relationship of a Jiva with Paramashiva (Lord Shiva) is that of Unity (Advaita). This means that there is no difference between Jiva and Shiva. The two are the same. However, we find ourselves involved in a relationship which is contrary - a relationship of a servant and a Master. This, thought, which is based on Duality, comes due to the state of forgetfulness which Paramashiva assumes due to 'His Divine Will' and his manifestation as Jiva. This relationship continues so long as Jiva remains forgetful. The relationship changes only through the act of Anugraha of Paramashiva.

6. What is my relationship with all that He created?

According to Trika philosophy 'Shivo'ham', meaning 'I am Shiva', has a deep meaning besides what has been discussed above. When each one of us thinks of, talks of and puts into practice the essence of 'Shivo'ham', imagine what is likely to happen. This thought creates a feeling of what is called 'Shiva Bhava' the feeling of Shiva. To every Jiva, every other Jiva is nothing but Shiva. To each one of us everything around us is nothing but Shiva. So, to a Shaivite everything in this universe is Shiva only. And, my relationship with all that is created by Shiva is again that of Advaita (Unity). I see no distinction in any of His creations.

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Avtar Nehru

Goffbal Babaji:

Once revered & visited by hundreds of pilgrims,
now a silent memory in the forests of Kashmir



In the aftermath of the devastating 1947 Kabaili (tribal) raid, the socio-religious life of Kashmiri Pandits in the old Baramulla district — with present-day Kupwara and Bandipora — underwent a quiet but significant transformation. The trauma of violence and displacement compelled many within the community

to seek new ways of strengthening faith, identity, and collective resilience by way of a creative revival: a network of refurbished shrines, saint ashrams, and pilgrimage circuits that blended devotion with healing.

In all probability, the forest abodes of Babajis (Gossain) in Chandigam (Lolab, Kupwara) and Guffbal (Rafiabad, Baramulla) were part of this spiritual innovation. Speaking specifically of the latter, oral accounts suggest that the Guffbal Babaji abode began in the early 1960s with the arrival of Swami Augustaya Muni—a naked, dhoti-clad hermit and tapasvi, with long jatas (matted hairlocks).

These accounts say that Guffbal Babaji was first spotted in Chowkibal and then taken to Zinpur Asthapan (near Bomai, Sopore), and finally to the Langate temple. From Langate, he was brought to HarduChanam, a village on the banks of the Hamal stream in Rafiabad, originating from the Qazinag glacier. According to witnesses, his arrival in the village was a surprising spectacle. He stayed in the open temple courtyard, refusing food for three days, and kept insisting on going to a cave (guff), some eight kilometres upstream in the forests. Though it was never clear who had discovered the cave or how, Babaji and his local associate from Langate seemed certain about it.

After three days of intense discussions, young boys and several Pandit men from the village accompanied him,

carrying rations, wooden building material, and utensils. After trekking all the way, they built a temporary hut (kutiya), where Babaji then settled. On his instructions, they dug nearby in search of water and eventually discovered two large springs and seven chinar trees, transforming the place into a serene and spiritual abode.

It is also said that he carried some Tamil books with him and may have been a Tamil—possibly a graduate—who had renounced his family and come to the Kashmir Valley in pursuit of spirituality. Complaints were once lodged against him for woodcutting, and some even suspected him of being a spy. However, over the years, he and the place evolved into a revered religious centre for hundreds of devotees who visited him regularly.

In its formative years, one Seth Tirath Ram from Pathankot supplied food provisions. Young men from Chanam carried these supplies from the bus stop to the kutiya. “We would go for mangoes, which tasted exceptionally sweet in those days. That was our bait—we would steal a few en route, and then Babaji would also reward us with mangoes for carrying the goods,” recalls a resident who was a young boy at the time. Sikhs from Hachiapora village delivered milk to the kutiya throughout the year, free of cost.

The Goffbal Babaji ashram was, in every sense, remarkable. Its main approach was from Dangiwacha via the Hamal stream ravine in Rafiabad. The last bus stop was at Hachiapora, after which one had to trek uphill for about two kilometres on foot. Most followers and visitors came by this route. Witnesses recall that the Pandits of HarduChanam—effectively the architects of the abode—played a key role in its upkeep and maintenance. They took turns visiting, managing provisions, repairs, and new additions. Musical mandlis performing bhajans (leelas) became an integral part of the ashram's life, ensuring a steady flow of visitors. A lady devotee, initially seeking blessings for childbirth, gradually became a sort of caretaker of the place for

several years.

Always wearing an affable smile and a thin beard, and speaking in a South Indian Hindi accent, he looked like one of the sages described in the scriptures. What made him truly extraordinary was his place of dwelling—an ashram known as Goffbal—located deep in an evergreen coniferous forest of towering deodars, some rising up to 100 feet. Together with other dense trees, the forest appeared haunting even to the bravest souls. His resting and meditation abode was a tree house built on a massive four-branched deodar, perched high above the ground. He lived alone in this dense forest, where tales of lions, bears, and other wild animals readily evoked fear.

The Goffbal ashram had a main cottage (kutiya), large enough to accommodate about fifty people. Babaji occupied nearly one-fourth of it as his sanctum, coated in mud plaster and separated by a symbolic mud wall a few inches high from the rest of the space. He would sit facing a constantly burning dhooni (sacred fire). On an elevated platform beyond the fire were a few framed photographs of deities, though notably there was no Shivalinga. The hut was flanked by two pristine water springs that formed a small creek flowing downhill. The ashram also had an eco-friendly kitchen garden and several fruit trees.

Visitors were not allowed to cross the symbolic boundary of his sanctum, and only a few service attendants were permitted for routine tasks. A peetal (brass) tumba often served as a kettle for visitors. Kept on the dhooni, it brewed kehwa, which was served with a kuklcha as standard hospitality. Pickles in earthen pots were also part of the customary offering for those who stayed for meals.

However, it was the annual yagya (havan) that became a grand spectacle—an event that, in today's terms, would “break the internet” and attract tourists even from Switzerland. People came from Srinagar and other places, many staying for several days during the week-long rituals culminating in the final havan. The langar, the pooja, the banter, the friendly quarrels, and the final procession—all unfolded in extraordinary serenity. Babaji was the centre of it all, and rituals ranging from ceremonial baths to new dhotis and showers of flowers made the occasion spleppndid. Villagers from Chanam recall that they had to remain especially vigilant, as Babaji, in moments of ecstatic frenzy during the havan, would attempt to jump into the fire.

The legend of Jyotishi Prem Nath Shastri, publisher of the Vijayeshwar Almanac, was also popularised through these congregations. His religious discourses,



delivered in simple language, captivated even illiterate housewives. His attire and persona made him a trusted guide-philosopher, someone who seemed to hold the cultural and religious identity of Kashmiri Pandits safely in his hands.

Initially, Goffbal Babaji spent winters alone, but later he began leaving Kashmir during the cold months—where he went remains unknown. People rarely saw him eat, except for a chutney of walnuts and chillies, soups, and tea. It is said that he retired to his tree house for meditation at night. Some believed that beneath the massive deodar tree lay a hidden cave where another baba was engaged in deep meditation, and that Babaji, through his yagyas, would one day reveal him.

Many people sought his blessings, and over time he became part of the folklore of the Valley—a recurring reference in local memory and conversation. This writer's native place was about five kilometres from Goffbal, accessible only through dense forest labyrinths that were not motorable. As children, visiting Goffbal Babaji was a regular ritual for our families. He held a special place in our lives.

However, this fairy-tale-like reality faded in the summer of 1984. In the aftermath of Operation Blue Star, he likely paid with his life for his symbolic status. His murder remains a mystery, and today Goffbal Babaji survives only in scattered memories. The place itself is said to have lost much of its former splendour and beauty.



Chander M Bhat

Kulwagishori Shrine, Kulgam

Nestled amidst the breathtaking landscape of the Diosur Pargana, Kulgam stands as the district headquarters, exuding a picturesque charm on the southern expanse of a plateau, commanding a panoramic view of the left bank of the Vashav river.

Here, the river's course unfolds, meandering through numerous channels, enhancing the natural allure of the surroundings.

In antiquity, Kulgam boasted renowned for its artisanal craft of wooden toy manufacturing, serving as a bustling hub for merchants and travelers embarking on journeys to Punjab via the Gulabgarh pass. This historical significance imbues Kulgam with a rich tapestry of cultural heritage, where echoes of commerce and craftsmanship blend seamlessly with the serene beauty of its natural setting, inviting exploration and appreciation from all who traverse its storied paths.

B.K.Raina and S.L.Sadhu in the book "Place Names in Kashmir" writes, ".....The place is named after the shrine of Kulvageshvari (Saraswati) which has attracted devotees from the remote past.

Some people feel the name should be traced to the word 'Kula', which with Trika undertones connoted 'the fulfiller of all desires.'

At the heart of Kulgam town lies the ancient Kulwagishori shrine, a revered site steeped in historical significance.

Just a kilometer away flows the pristine waters of freshet Vashav, enhancing the shrine's tranquil ambiance. Legend has it that the very name "Kulgam" finds its roots in Kulwagishori, underscoring the shrine's profound influence on the town's identity and cultural heritage.

Devotees and visitors alike are drawn to this sacred sanctuary, where spirituality intertwines with the natural beauty of its surroundings, creating an atmosphere of reverence and tranquility that has endured through the ages.

Spanning across approximately 3 Kanal of land, the shrine complex surrounding Kulwagishori shrine encompasses a sacred expanse imbued with spiritual resonance. Near the entrance, a holy spring glistens, its crystal clear waters measuring 4 feet by 12 feet, serving as a symbol of purity and sanctity. Adjacent to the temple, a twostorey Dharamshala stands, providing pilgrims with accommodations for rest and reflection. Within the precincts, an elm tree stands enclosed within a small temple, revered as the dwelling place of Raza Saab of Kulgam, infusing the atmosphere with an aura of divine presence and reverence.





This harmonious blend of natural beauty and spiritual significance creates an oasis of serenity where seekers and devotees find solace and connection with the sacred.

Enshrined within the temple is Mata Kulwagishori, embodied in the form of a sacred Shila adorned with vermilion, radiating divine presence and blessings. Tragically, in December 1990, this revered temple faced devastation as it was razed to the ground, an event that shook the hearts of devotees and residents alike.

Despite this profound loss, the spirit of devotion and reverence for Mata Kulwagishori endures, serving as a testament to the resilience of faith in the face of adversity. Efforts to rebuild and restore the temple stand as a symbol of hope, seeking to revive the sanctity and splendor of this cherished spiritual sanctuary for generations to come.

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Dr. Chaman Lal Raina

The Vedic Way of Spirituality and its Impact on the Sanātana Way of Life

The *Vaidika-paramparā* (वैदिक-परम्परा), as the primordial stream of Bhāratiya thought, rests upon the perception of *Brahman* (ब्रह्मन्) as the all-pervading reality — manifesting equally as *Devatā* (देवता) and *Devī* (देवी). This vision affirms the *Ekam Sat* (एकं सत्) — the One Existence — expressed through infinite names and forms (*bahudhāvadantiviprāḥ*, बहुधावदन्तिविप्राः), thereby establishing the unity of all that exists.

In this philosophical worldview, the triadic principle of *Parameśvara–Jīvātman–Prakṛti* (परमेश्वर-जीवात्मन्-प्रकृति) forms the metaphysical foundation. *Parameśvara* signifies the Supreme Consciousness; *Jīvātman* denotes the individualized spark of that consciousness; and *Prakṛti* embodies the dynamic matrix of creation. The interplay of these three determines the rhythm of life (*ṛta*, ऋत) and the dhārmic order (*dharma*, धर्म).

Symbolism and Continuity of Mātr-devī Worship

In its archetypal form, the prehistoric Mātr-devī embodied:

- *Śṛṣṭi-śakti* (सृष्टि-शक्ति) — generative and creative force.
- *Rakṣaṇa-śakti* (रक्षण-शक्ति) — guardian and nurturer of life.
- *Samhāra-śakti* (संहार-शक्ति) — transformative and regenerative energy.

These aspects were later assimilated into Vedic and Purāṇic forms of *Devī* such as *Durgā*, *Kālī*, *Lakṣmī*, and *Sarasvatī*, preserving the prehistoric essence while deepening its metaphysical scope.

Integration into the Vedic Vision

The Vedas subsumed and elevated the prehistoric feminine principle into the cosmic doctrine of *Śakti* (शक्ति), viewing it as the *Mūla-prakṛti* (मूल-प्रकृति), the root energy of the universe. This finds echo in:

- *Ekam Sat ViprāBahudhāVadanti* — affirming unity in diversity.
- *Ṛtam* — the cosmic order which Śakti upholds.
- *Śabda-brahman* — where the primal sound (*Om*, ॐ)



emanates from the womb of creation (*Hiranyagarbha*, हिरण्यगर्भ).
• *Pañca-mahābhūta* — the five great elements, seen as the limbs of the Cosmic Mother.

VaidikaĀdhyātmika Ethos

1. *Ātman–Brahman Aikya* (आत्मन्- ब्रह्मन् ऐक्य) — Liberation lies in realizing the non-duality (*advaita*, अद्वैत) between the self and

the absolute.

2. *Karma–Dharma* — Right action aligned with cosmic law sustains spiritual evolution.

3. *Yajña* — Not merely ritual sacrifice, but the perpetual act of self-offering (*ātma-samarpaṇa*, आत्म-समर्पण).

4. *Sādhana-mārga* — The Vedic path integrates:

- *Dhyāna* (ध्यान) — meditative absorption.
- *Yoga* (योग) — union of body, mind, and spirit.
- *Bhakti* (भक्ति) — devotion as the soul's surrender to the Divine Mother and Father.

Impact on the Sanātana Way of Life

This Vedic-Śākta synthesis forged a world view where cosmic order and human duty are inseparable. The Sanātana Dharma thus inherited a spiritual anthropology in which the human is a microcosm (*piṇḍa*, पिण्ड) of the macrocosm (*brahmāṇḍa*, ब्रह्माण्ड), and the Mother Principle permeates both. The reverence for *Devī* as the eternal matrix of creation continues to shape ethical conduct, ecological reverence, and spiritual practice in Bhāratiya culture and the global Hindu diaspora.

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Virender Bangroo

The Abandoned Houses of Kashmiri Pandits: A Symbol of Trauma and Displacement

Introduction

The Kashmir Valley, once a vibrant and harmonious community, bears witness to the tragic exodus of Kashmiri Pandits. The abandoned houses, a testament to their displacement, stand as poignant reminders of the trauma and pain endured by the community. These houses, once filled with laughter and life, now lie vacant, a symbol of the loss and longing that haunts the Kashmiri Pandits.

The Historical Context

The exodus of Kashmiri Pandits from the Valley is a complex and multifaceted issue, driven by a combination of factors including persecution, violence, and intimidation. As they fled their ancestral homes, many were compelled to leave behind their most precious possessions, including their homes, which held not only monetary value but also deep emotional and cultural significance.

The Emotional Significance of Abandoned Houses

For many Kashmiri Pandits, these houses represent a connection to their past, their ancestors, and their cultural heritage. They are not just physical structures but repositories of memories, traditions, and values. The desire to preserve these homes is not merely about maintaining property but about holding on to one's identity and history.

The Trauma of Displacement

The abandoned houses serve as a constant reminder of the trauma and displacement experienced by the Kashmiri Pandits. They are a painful reminder of what was lost and what can never be regained. The houses, though lifeless, seem to haunt the Kashmiri Pandits, reminding them time and again of their displacement and the uncertainty of their return.

The Issue of Distress Sales

Many Kashmiri Pandits, under duress and facing uncertainty, were forced to sell their properties at throwaway prices. These transactions, often made under coercion or fear, have left a lasting impact on the community. The loss of ancestral homes and land has not only economic implications but also erodes the community's connection to its roots and heritage.

The Importance of Preserving Cultural Heritage

The preservation of these abandoned houses is crucial for safeguarding the cultural heritage of the Kashmiri Pandit community. These houses are a testament to the community's history, traditions, and resilience. Efforts to document and preserve these homes could serve as a testament to the community's legacy and promote a deeper understanding of the region's complex history.

The Human Cost of Displacement

The displacement of Kashmiri Pandits has had a profound impact on the community's mental and emotional well-being. The trauma of displacement has been passed down through generations, and the community continues to suffer from the loss of their ancestral homes and land. The abandoned houses serve as a constant reminder of the community's displacement and the uncertainty of their return.

The abandoned houses of Kashmiri Pandits in the Kashmir Valley are a poignant reminder of the community's trauma and displacement. These houses, once vibrant homes filled with life and laughter, now stand as a testament to the loss and longing that haunts the community. It is essential to recognize the emotional significance of these houses and the importance of preserving the cultural heritage of the Kashmiri Pandit community.

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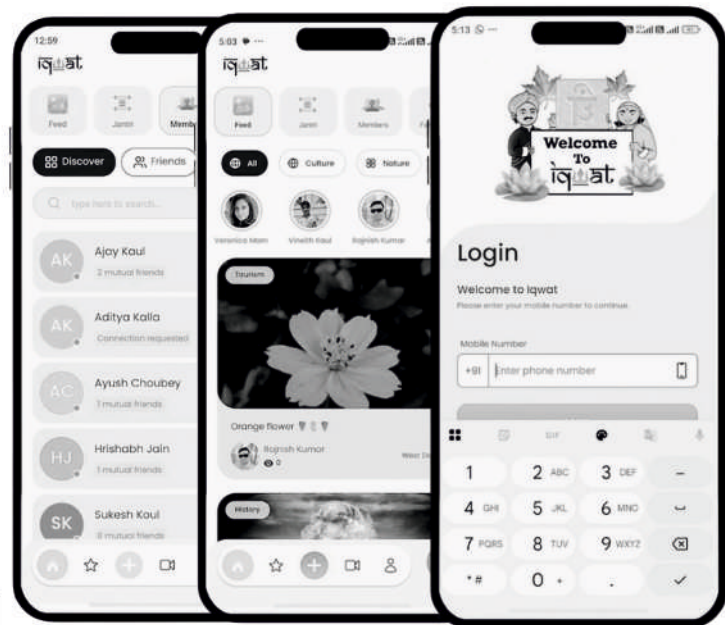
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Sanjay Pandita

Yagnopavit Among Kashmiri Pandits: The Sacred Thread in a Changing World

In the Kashmiri Pandits, few ceremonies possess the emotional, cultural, and philosophical depth of the Yagnopavit, locally known as Mekhal.

It is not merely a ritual worn on the body; it is a religious rite etched into collective memory—held together by centuries of tradition, by the rhythms of the Jhelum, and by the enduring whisper of Shaiva mantras that once echoed across the Valley.

The ceremony marks a sacred threshold, a rite of passage through which a child steps into the world of knowledge, lineage, and dharma. Elsewhere in India it

is known as Upanayana or Janeu Sanskar, but among Kashmiri Pandits it assumes a far deeper and layered identity, shaped by Kashmir's Brahmanical past, the metaphysical refinement of Trika Shaivism, and the quiet resilience of a community that has learned to carry its traditions even in exile.

To grasp the ceremony's significance, one must return to the ancient texture of Kashmiri life—when Sanskrit scholars walked along the banks of the Vitasta, when the Sharada script flourished in centres of learning, and



when Kashmir stood as a luminous seat of Vedic and Shaiva thought.

In that world, the Yagnopavit was not a token ritual; it marked a child's formal entry into spiritual discipline and intellectual responsibility.

It signified the beginning of brahmacharya, granting the right to study sacred texts, to recite the Gayatri mantra, and to participate consciously in ritual life.

It was understood as a second birth—the awakening of awareness—rendering the initiate dvija, the twice-born.

What distinguishes the Kashmiri Pandit tradition from most of India is the ceremonial structure itself.

The initiation unfolds in three interconnected stages: Mekhal, Yagnopavit proper, and Devgun or Devbar.

Together, these form a seamless progression of purification, initiation, and spiritual commitment. At the heart of this triad lies the Mekhal.

Traditionally, the Yagnopavit is performed between the ages of seven and twelve, with ten regarded as especially auspicious.

This age corresponds to a child's intellectual awakening, when discipline, curiosity, and moral awareness begin to take root.

In ancient Kashmir, the ceremony was closely linked to the beginning of formal education in temple schools, Sanskrit pathshalas, and under the guidance of Shaiva and Shakta scholars.

While contemporary practice has become more flexible—sometimes delayed or merged with marriage rituals—the classical ideal still survives in cultural memory as the age when the imprint of learning is deepest.

The Mekhal itself is rich in symbolism drawn from Kashmir's spiritual landscape.

The child is dressed not merely in ceremonial garments but in meanings.

A belt made of sacred reeds—the mekhal—is tied around his waist, symbolizing restraint, self-discipline, and the conscious regulation of the senses.

It signifies the gathering of youthful energy and its redirection toward mindful living.

A sacred staff, is placed in his hand, representing authority, discipline, and readiness to walk the path of knowledge.

For a moment, the child becomes a miniature ascetic, embodying the ideal of the student-scholar.

Among the most striking elements of the Kashmiri Mekhal is the symbolic tiger-skin wrap.

Though not an actual tiger skin, it evokes the ancient iconography of yogis and sages who sat upon such skins

as a sign of mastery over fear and instinct.

Through this symbol, the child is linked to the lineage of Kashmiri thinkers—Vasugupta, Utpaladeva, Abhinavagupta—whose philosophical brilliance defined Kashmir's Shaiva tradition.

The initiation thus extends beyond family lineage into a shared intellectual and spiritual ancestry.

Equally distinctive is the Djanihār, a small pouch hung around the child's neck. Traditionally containing grains, barley, and sacred ash, it represents nourishment, purity, and the dissolution of ego.

It serves as a reminder that the seeds of discipline must be carried within, that knowledge sustains life, and that spiritual growth requires the constant burning away of arrogance.

This inward emphasis reflects the Kashmiri Pandit preference for internalizing ritual meaning rather than merely performing its external form.

Central to the ceremony is the initiation into the Gayatri mantra. In Kashmir, it is imparted with careful attention to pronunciation, breath, and sound vibration, following chanting traditions rooted in the Sharada phonetic system.

The mantra is not casually whispered; it is entrusted as spiritual wealth, meant to be nurtured through daily practice.

Following the Mekhal, the sacred thread is placed over the child's left shoulder.

The three strands resonate deeply with Kashmiri Shaivism, symbolizing iccha shakti, kriya shakti, and jnana shakti (the energies of action, and knowledge).

The thread is not a social marker but a constant reminder of alignment with cosmic energy systems. Now the child is expected to observe daily rituals and cultivate self-discipline.

One of the most poignant moments of the ceremony is the symbolic departure from home.

Carrying a sacred bowl, seeking funds from elders, embodying humility to submit all his achievement, at the feet of Guru and gatherings.

In the modern world, however, the ceremony inhabits a complex space.

For some families, it has become compressed or symbolic, shaped by urban life and displacement.

Yet for others, especially in the post-1990 diaspora, it has gained renewed significance as a cultural anchor.

These families consciously preserve the full ritual, emphasizing understanding over form.



Dr. Shah Faesal

Did Lord Rama visit Kashmir during his exile?

In Kashmiri language, the word for rainbow is Rama Doon, meaning Rama's Bow. Doon also means the bow string used for fluffing cotton by local quilt-makers. As a child growing up in a sleepy village close to the Line of Control, my fascination with this word, Rama Doon, surpassed the wonder evoked by these elusive arcs as we chased them across the walnut groves.

Who was this Rama who owned such a colorful bow, and why would a rainbow have such a mysterious name? Or was it about some quilt-maker; as a child I often asked these questions to my father, a schoolteacher and a self-taught polyglot? But every time I did so, he would reply with two lines from a Kashmiri lullaby Ram RamBhadren Booni, and then quickly put on his teacher's hat and remind me that VIBGYOR was the correct order of the colors in the rainbow - V for violet, I for Indigo and so on. By the time our duet ended on R for red, I knew that Rama's discussion had to be left for another day.

This question never really got answered and no one could tell me whether Lord Rama had ever visited Kashmir for the rainbows to be named after him. Were Kashmiri people even familiar with Ramayana given that Kashmiri Pandits strictly followed the Shaivite tradition? According to Kalhana's Rajtarangani, a 12th-century historical chronicle, Ramayana used to be recited in Kashmir during the times of Damodara-2, a king whose period is traced to the 2nd Century BC. But then, after so many centuries and historical changes, was Rama still a part of the Kashmiri consciousness, and how our generation of Kashmiri Muslim youth paid unconscious homage to Lord Rama's legacy? These were some of the other things that I wanted to understand.

Our village had a sizeable population of Kashmiri

Pandits who lived near the market while we lived towards the hills. But by the time I turned six, our Pandit neighbours had already migrated due to terror threats. I hardly remember anything from that time. But I do vividly remember those wintery evenings when smoky winds would drop warm ash and burnt pieces of paper over our compounds as we looked at the ominous but distant blazes towards the east of the village. A house every night - that was how the Kashmiri Pandit houses would be torched - after they had migrated to Jammu and terrorists, both local and from faraway lands, ruled the streets. Winds carried burnt notebooks, shreds of clothes, and charred walnut leaves from these empty Pandit homes showered all over the village as if winds were snatching from flames the forbidden pieces of history.

With Kashmir becoming a hotspot of global Jihad, would anyone have told us about Rama and Ramayana at that hour of the night? No.

It was many years after this, during my District Training as an IAS probationer when I became interested again in these haunting questions of the past. During a field visit to Sutharan village in the Budgam district of Kashmir, I was amazed to learn about the local retelling of Ramayana. The village Sutharan or Sitharan, a slice of heaven with lush-green meadows and pine forests but without even a proper road those days, was as per the local folklore, the place where Ravana had abducted Sita Ji, Lord Rama's wife.

A freshwater spring and a large rock nearby were pointed out to me as the exact spots where Sri Ramchandra, Sita Ji, and Lakshman had visited sometime during the 14-year exile of Lord Ram. Nearby was another village named Kanchetpora (in Kashmiri Kanchet means one with a torn ear),

apparently a reference to Shurpanakha, Ravana's sister whose ear and nose were chopped by Lakshman as per the Valmiki's Ramayana.

It was incredible that the local Muslims of Sutharan had a perfect recollection of these events.

With the advent of Islam in the fourteenth century, the majority population in Kashmir acquired a new faith but the Kashmiri consciousness continued to remain rooted in the universalism of Shaivism and Sufi Islam.

The teachings of Lalla Ded and Sheikh ul Alam created a Kashmiri subject who didn't make a distinction between Hindu and Muslim. This Kashmiri subject valued syncretism and transcendental spiritual experience more than the rigid dogmas of organized religion. As part of cultural production, art, poetry, music, architecture, crafts, festivals, and religious practices emerged that brought together elements from Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism, making Kashmir a sui generis case of peaceful coexistence.

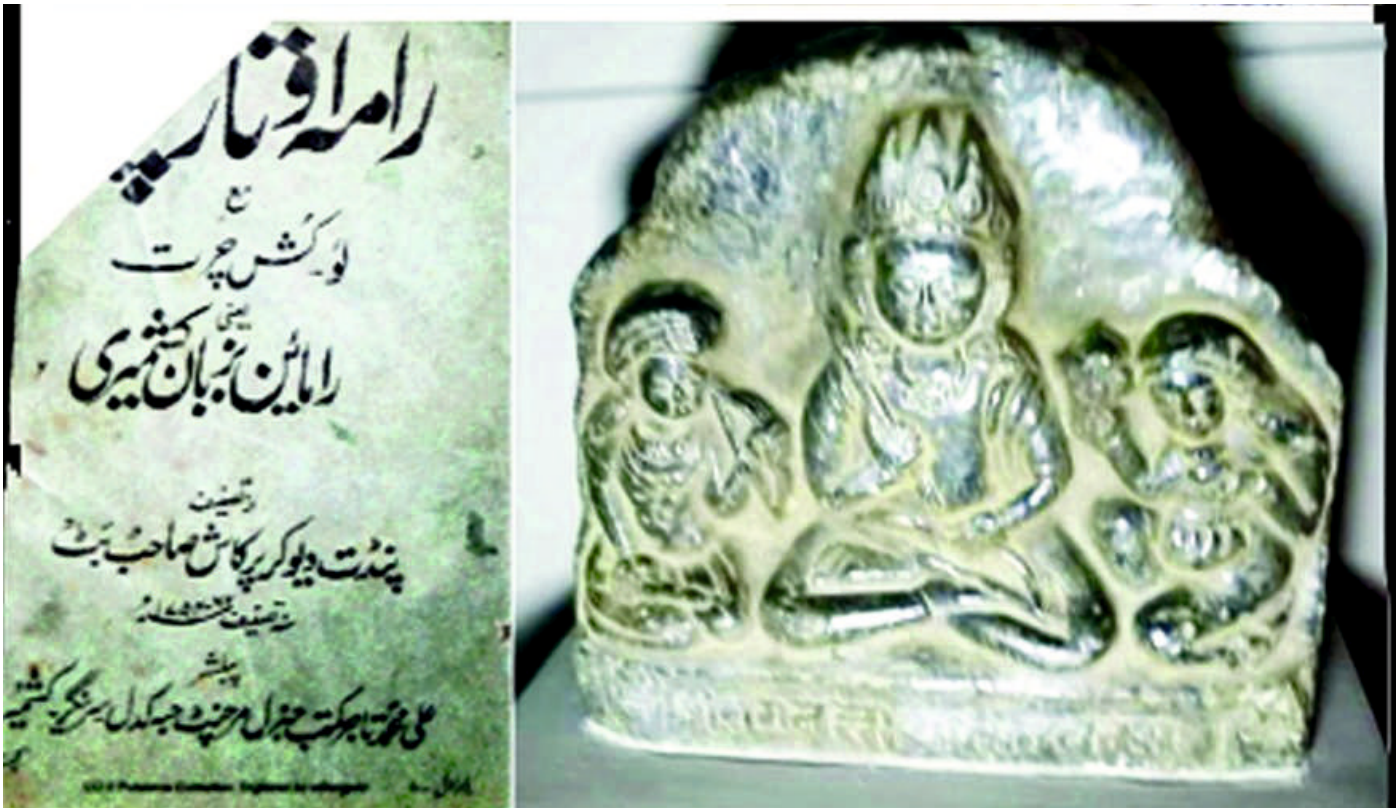
Nevertheless, Lord Ram's journeys through a land where Lord Shiva was the reigning deity continued to intrigue me till I came to know of another place around 150 Kilometers from the Sutharan Village.

That was Farkin in district Kupwara, a small hamlet high in the hills, totally unrelated to Sutharan village. There also, an area called Raja Ram ki Ladi had a similar legend associated with it and a fresh-water spring nearby called Sita Sar is said to have been visited by Sita Ji during the years of Lord Ram's exile.

Farkin, Kupwara in that sense is very similar to Orcha, Madhya Pradesh, one of the very few places in India where Lord Rama is remembered as Raja Ram or King Rama.

It is no surprise that for many millennia Lord Rama has persisted like a light in the Kashmiri consciousness, in Kashmiri idiom, folklore, legend, art, ways of thinking, sayings, place names, written materials and the memory of Lord Ram's sojourn in Kashmir must be cherished as part of our civilizational memory. From Indonesia to Thailand, and Cambodia to Kupwara,

Rama is the recurring motif in our common spiritual canvas that stretches across oceans and continents. And more importantly, Sri Ram, called Imam-e-Hind, by Allama Iqbal, is the well-spring of India's spiritual fountain and the rainbows over Kashmir will always remind us of his blessed sojourn in the Valley.





T. N. Dhar 'Kundan'

Divine Eye

The beauty of Shree Gita is that it is at once an audio and a video both. Up to the eleventh chapter it is in an audio mode wherein Shree Krishna explains various aspects of human life, means of attaining knowledge, responsibility to undertake duties and the essence of individual soul and universal soul. Then at the request of Arjuna He first shows the video of His giant universal self and then normal human appearance.

Thereafter the narration again reverts to audio explanation of the remaining topics including the nature and the demonic and divine traits. Before showing His giant universal form the Lord gives him a divine eye 'Divya Chakshu' in order to facilitate Arjuna to see the bewildering unseen form of the Lord. He is terrified, nervous and awe-stricken because of which he begs of Him to revert to His human form.

In the entire eighteen chapters of the divine book all topics of knowledge, action, devotion, sacrifice and contemplation are discussed, analysed and explained. Arjuna is asked to do his duty as a warrior, which is to fight for truth and justice. Even so towards the end of the eighteenth chapter the Lord says to him that secret of secrets has been revealed to him and it is for him to decide what is proper for him to do. However, Shree Krishna hastens to add, 'having said that, if you surrender unto Me I shall relieve you of all sins and you will have nothing to worry about.' Interestingly no divine eye was required to surrender and entrust the life to Him.

Knowledge is a tricky subject. It needs deep study, contemplation and calculation, analysis of pros and cons as also of the right and wrong, transient and lasting. Action is equally a tricky matter. Even Gita admits, 'Kim karma kim akarma itikavayoapimohitah – what is action and what is not action is a question that

baffles even intellectuals.' So, a man has to spend his life time in order to gain knowledge, decide about the right action and then undertake it. But the safest course is 'Bhakti' or devotion. There is no complication, no intricacies and no indecisive state. One has to surrender and the life will be taken care of. There are three sets of actions.

One is Karma – that which gets done voluntarily or involuntarily and we cannot stop it.

The second is Karya – that which is desirable like yajna, tapas, daana or sacrificial fire, austerity and charity.

The third is Kartavya – that which forms our duty and has been adopted by us as our function and therefore, must be done.

Those who have been devoted to Bhagavaan Gopinath ji, have full faith and confidence in him and above all have unflinching love for him will tell you how smooth and trouble free their life has been. He has taken care of them and they have been rendered worry-less. If you have love for him, if you are devoted to him, if you have faith and trust in him and if you bow before his lotus feet no divine eye is needed to recognize him and his importance in our lives. Our normal human eye, our straight and simple demeanour, our truth and our perseverance are sufficient to attract his attention and receive his blessings. Although people say that he was a saint of few words, my own feeling is that he was very selective in expressing his views. He was silent at times, evasive at times but eloquent and forthright too whenever the need arose to bring home his view point on the listeners and devotees. He would listen to the troubles and tribulations of those who approached him, attentively and patiently and give them proper solution to their problems so that they are free from worries. On

the spiritual front also he would evaluate his devotee and see which particular path he is capable of walking on and which particular methodology is beneficial for his uplift.

It is reported that once somebody chose the path of 'Kundalini' awakening but Bhagavaan ji was of the view that was not suitable for him. Eventually it turned out to be so and the person concerned was lost.

On many occasions he lent a patient ear to the worldly needs of his devotees and solved their problem. Similarly on many occasions he foresaw what his devotees were going to face in due course of time and gave them protection and solution in advance.

Even now, I firmly believe that his benign eye is on all of us and he is ever prepared to save us, show us the way and help us take the right path. No divine eye is needed by us to benefit from his favour and kindness and blessings. All that is required is our faith and trust in him and surrender at his lotus feet. In fact it is he who possesses a divine eye with which he sees past, present and future very clearly. He is kind, compassionate and benign and is always there to be with us. Bhakti or devotion is a great tool, very effective, very useful and the tool that brings decisive results. This was the path, which all the Gopis of Gokul, Brindavana and Barsane adopted and got the bliss of proximity to Shri Krishna as a result thereof. Even Arjuna, who was an intellectual and who treaded upon the path of knowledge, Jnana Marga had eventually to adopt the path of devotion, Bhakti Marga. I personally feel that he was transformed from an intellectual to a devotee, from Arjuna to a Gopi.

All the spiritual teachers teach us to go from without to within. When we look out we use our physical eyes and are able to see all that is worldly, mundane and transient. If we close these eyes and look within we have necessarily to use our divine eye. This enables us to see the celestial, the permanent and the universal truth. We see the unknown, the unfathomable and the indescribable. If there is any problem in this exercise we can immediately turn to our beloved Bhagavaan ji and seek his guidance, advice and also blessings. When the divine eye is at work it is easier to relate to him for help and direction because our wave lengths are matching. If the physical eye alone is operating, it may be rather difficult to relate to him although in that

situation also he may come to our rescue and assistance should he deem so fit and should he consider us deserving for his grace. Again it may be reiterated that in order to become deserving in his view, we have to imbibe all those qualities and virtues which he has prescribed for us from time to time. If we take to the path of truth, simplicity and piety he will always be there to shower his grace on us. If we engage in Sadhana, the spiritual exercise and Seva, the service unto mankind, he will guide us and give us the right direction for our emancipation and liberation.

For any seeker the most important feature has to be his 'Shraddha' or faith. Adi Shankaracharya has defined this term as unflinching trust in one's 'Guru' or preceptor and the scriptures, the Shri Gita, Upanishads, Vedas, Brahma Sutra etc. It follows, therefore, that we have to trust our Bab ji that he is always there to look after our needs. Let us recall how much importance he used to give to the study of Shri Gita. Perhaps he recognized that this was a compendium of all scriptures and contained the knowledge and philosophy of all the Vedas, Upanishads etc.

All the chapters of this holy book are called Yoga of one topic or the other. Even the despondence of Arjuna expressed in the first chapter is linked with yoga. We can similarly be despondent for one reason or the other but it is that despondence or vishad that will connect us to our Guru Maharaj.

He will select the appropriate path for us according to our capacity, acumen and inclination. It could be the path of Jnana or knowledge, the path of detached action, Nishkama Karma, the path of contemplation or Dhyana or that of devotion, Bhakti. Thereafter our sustained effort together with Guru Kripa, his grace will see us through and we shall get to our destination.

It has been well said that all paths lead to the same Param Shiva like all rivers ultimately merging with the great ocean. Wherever the divine eye is needed in this process, the grace of Bhagavaan ji will certainly activate it in us so that we are able to see what is required to be seen, we are able to know what is needed to be known and we are able to become what we should be.

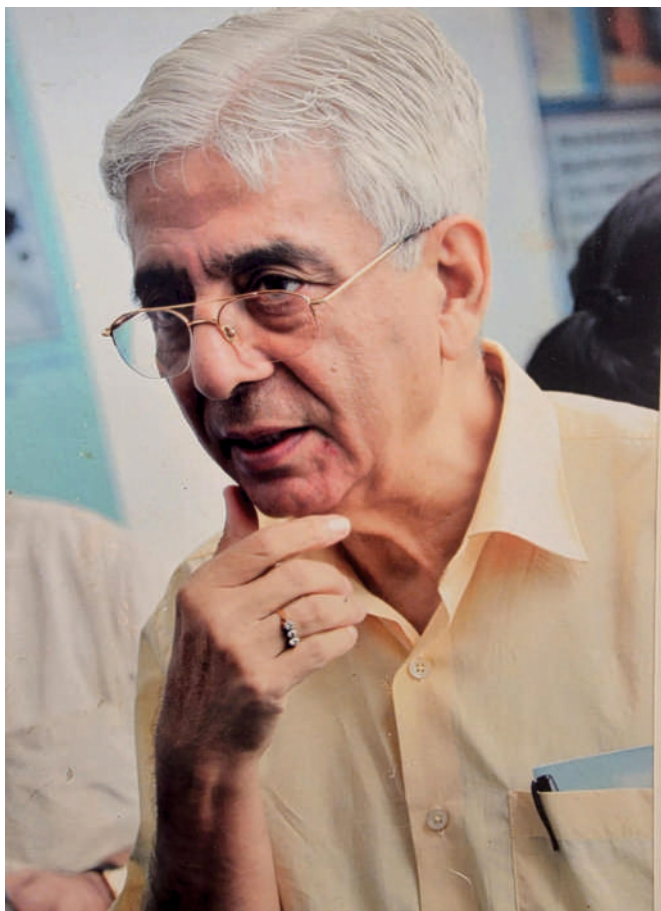
In other words we shall be able to realize ourselves, the ultimate truth and the Divine.



Rajinder Premi

Maharaj Krishen Kaw - An Apostle of Humanity

Some are born with God given extra ordinary abilities, creative acumen & talent, who by virtue of such sublime qualities trend paths to lead others. These people look & behave as ordinary citizens, but their intellect & sensibilities make them towering to carve out a niche for themselves and make an everlasting impact, thus leave behind a great legacy. M K Kaw was one such.



Shri Kaw was born on 10.11.1941 in Srinagar Kashmir to Sh. Prem Nath Kaw and Smt. Somawati Kaw. At the

age of ten he passed his matriculation in 1952 & joined IAS in 1964 and was allotted to the Himachal Pradesh Cadre where he held important posts including that of the Principal Secretary to CM, Education Secretary and also Finance Secretary. He also spent fifteen years in the center and held the important positions that of the Member Secretary of the 5th Pay Commission, Secretary Ministry of Civil Aviation and also Secretary MHRD, Deptt of Hr. Education.

Finally Kaw Sahib retired from IAS Govt Service in 2001. Kaw Sahib had been very active in social causes. After his retirement Kaw Sahab worked as Dean of Shri Sathya Sai International Centre for Human Values, New Delhi, Chairman, Board of Governors of NIIT, Srinagar, Kashmir and also worked as chairman of the committee on re-organisation of the DGCA. He was also a member of core group of the Centre for Governance.

Shri Kaw had immense love and affection for his roots. He had always kept a strong bond with Language, Literature, Art, Rituals, Traditions and ethos of Kashmir. also he got elected President of Kashmir culture Education Science Society (KECSS) twice and also the President of Apex Organization of Kashmiri Pandits, All India Kashmiri Samaj (AIKS).

Kaw sahib was a poet and a fiction writer, along the side of bureaucracy, an administrator, social activist, leader and columnist. Shri Kaw gained literary recognition with "Bureaucracy Gets Crazier- IAS unmasked", which attained the status of a classic.

This book was published in 1993 and became an instant best seller as it was sold out in 30 days. This book has also been translated into Hindi and Punjabi.

Late Kaw published his autobiography under the title “An Outsider Every Where” in 2012.

“Kaw Caw, silly point” is yet another famous book which he has authored in 2014. He wrote two monthly columns “Kaw Caw” for the journal 'Naad’ of AIKS and Silly Point for the magazine G-files the prestigious journal of governance.

Shri Kaw has given me these books as my favourite gifts with putting his autograph recording the dates given. My last meeting with him was at his residence on 15.09.2019 some days before he breathed his last.

Achievements

M K Kaw, the President of AIKS (3/2003 to 3/2009), the main achievements during this period under his stewardship:-

1. One of the first step during this period was the adoption of new and detailed constitution for AIKS, which was printed and widely circulated.
2. AIKS formulated a National Policy in Kashmir, which was published in a booklet form.
3. Another document which is of the critical importance is the strategy paper on the eventual return of KPs to the valley.
4. His meeting with the PM in September 2004 led to the setting up of inter-ministerial committee headed by Smt. Sushma Chaudhary. This committee submitted its report with 24 recommendations, out of which 18 were approved by the PM in May 2005. This initiative was mainly responsible for the construction of 5242 TRT flats at Jammu & Nagrota.
5. A petition was filed in October 2006, which was admitted by the Hon'ble Supreme Court and notices were issued to both the Central and State government. It was only by the impact of this writ petition, that the then PM announced a package for Kashmiri Migrants in May 2008.
6. AIKS was recognized as the apex of the Pandits organisations by inviting it to the PMs round table conference in 2005.



On Cultural Front

1. During the Presidentship of Mr. Kaw first quarterly Magazine “Vaakh” in Kashmiri Devnagri script started to get published which is the literary magazine in Devnagri script.

2. AIKS made an attempt to assume the management of the KP Shrines and Temples in the valley through the passing of a Temples and Shrines Bill.

3. In October 2018 the AIKS entered into an agreement with KoshurSumchar for the management of two Shakti Nagar plots allotted to Koshur-Sumchar. A Bhoomi poojan, along with a Hawan was performed on the plot site.

Shri M K Kaw will always be remembered by the entire community for his selfless services to the community particularly by the younger generation, students, whom he facilitated administrations in educational institutes as secretary to the Government of India, Dept. of Higher Education, Ministry of HRD.

I may reiterate once again that we should not mourn his death, but celebrate his contributions as he was truly a living Karma Yogi.

Email-id:- premirajinder@gmail.com



Dr. Gauri Shankar Raina

Inter-Cultural Communication through Translation

All of us know that great works of the world have reached us through translations. Many important works have been translated by competent translators but, dictated by the historical, social and cultural contexts, changes occur and new styles of translations emerge. The translators take into account the broader contextual dimensions and the translation starts to shape a new literary canon. The impact of translations is so enormous these days that it has led to making detailed comparisons between the source and the target texts. Such analyses have advocated that both be considered as equal products. In translation, the text from the confines of a particular language area unifies with a bigger language region. This unification is not just the transfer of one text into another but is a mediation between cultures. When cultures come together through meaningful translations, the newly created text creates an understanding of the other societies, their traditions and their ways of life. So we must look on translations in a much broader frame—not only as a great unifying force but also as an act of inter-cultural communication.

The changing temperament of the new world compels us to depend on new communication methods. In this changing scenario, Shakespeare is being presented in simpler translations and adaptations all across the globe, as he has made great plays out of the 'muddled philosophy of life'. Many plays of Shakespeare, including Othello, have been translated into Kashmiri. I have also translated his comedy Taming of the Shrew into Kashmiri. The plot mainly portrays courtship of Katherine and Petruchio but there are many subplots like in most of the Indian tales.

Many literary works have been translated into Indian and foreign languages by many writers. I have also tried my pen on translation.

At the end, let me present my translation of Krishna Joo Razdan's devotional poem 'Hosh Dim Lagayo Pamposh Padan...'

O the power of Ascetics, the life of living creatures
Knowledge of the knowledgeable

With your blessings the ascetic practice is accomplished
O the holiest of the holies!

Realizing your consciousness from the unconscious is bliss
Or else it is like carrying water in the baskets
The water of love oozes from the springs of my heart
O the holiest of the holies!

Being a bit of Brahm I bring not in mind the eternal Brahm
Look not at my devilish nature
The path of devotion, in reality, was followed by Prahlada
O the holiest of the holies!

O the Supreme Being I have faith in you
I wish to sacrifice my bowed down body at your feet
O the resonating sound, do hear our requests
O the holiest of the holies!

Bring the light of knowledge to the thoughtful mind of the blind
O Shiva, we may search out for you in Harmukh
With focussed mind without desires, like the zeal of Ram
O the holiest of the holies!

Shower your kindness on us
Our sins may be less or more
Forgive us for our sins, you the Supreme
O the holiest of the holies!

Had Krishnajo worn your apparel
He would not have changed his attire again and again
The measure of the cloth would not have been deficient
O the holiest of the holies!

Brevity should have been there in my silent speech
Should not have spoken for so long
Ought to have remembered that I am still in my childhood
O the holiest of the holies!

Karnail Singh

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Kashyap Dhar

Artificial Intelligence and Our Human Future

AI - Artificial intelligence, has become a transformative force in modern society, subtly but significantly changing how we interact with the world around us. From enhancing productivity to reshaping industries, AI has started to permeate almost every aspect of our daily lives. This revolution, however, often takes place behind the scenes, with many unaware of the extent to which AI shapes their routines.

Industry	Healthcare	Finance	Manufacturing & Services	Governance
Primary Future Applications	AI-assisted surgery and early disease detection via ML image analysis.	Real-time fraud detection and AI-driven algorithmic trading.	Predictive maintenance (IIoT) and automated precision assembly.	Smart city management for traffic and environmental monitoring.
Key Benefit	Enhanced patient outcomes and reduced diagnostic errors.	Increased security and optimized investment performance.	Reduced downtime and improved product quality.	Improved urban resource allocation and public safety.

The Rise of Personal Assistants

One of the most prominent and immediate ways, AI is transforming our daily livesthrough the rise of personal assistants. Siri, Alexa, Google Assistant, and other voice-activated technologies are now household names, seamlessly integrated into our smartphones, smart homes, and even our carswhichdramatically simplified tasks that once required manual effort, such as setting alarms, sending messages, or searching for information onlineThis shift towards highly intuitive, user-centered technology in various devices has not only improved convenience but also changed our relationship with technology itself, making it feel more like a personal companion. Things AI adding a layer of comfort, convenience, and security to daily life and hence turning AI into an invisible but essential part of the home.

AI in Healthcare is Lifesaver in the Making

Among most groundbreaking applications of AI is in healthcare, where it is revolutionizing patient care, diagnosis, and treatment. AI is being used to analyze medical data, assist in clinical decision-making, and even predict health outcomes to improve the overall quality and efficiency of healthcare.AI algorithms are now capable of analyzing medical images, such as X-rays

and MRIs, to detect signs of diseases faster and with greater accuracy.Beyond diagnostics, AI is also playing a significant role in personalized medicine, by analyzing a patient's unique genetic makeup, lifestyle, and medical history to create customized treatment plans that are more effective. AI-powered robots in surgerycan perform highly precise and minimally invasive surgeries, reducing recovery times and improving outcomes, even, to monitor patients remotelyand reducing the need for frequent hospital visits.

Autonomous Vehicle are Roads to the Future

The rise of autonomous vehicles (AVs) is another example of how AI is transforming everyday life. Self-driving cars are becoming a reality like Tesla, Waymo, and others are at the forefront of developing and testing vehicles that can navigate and operate without human intervention.The impact of AVs on daily life could be profound as AI-driven cars don't suffer from distractions, fatigue, or impaired judgment, and have the potential to significantly lower the number of road fatalities and injuries, vehicles could reduce traffic congestion by optimizing routes and travel times, leading to more efficient transportation systems for physical challenged people. AI driven AVs will also have a

significant economic impact for industries such as transportation, logistics, and insurance.

AI in Manufacturing improves Proactivity and Quality with Reduced Costs

AI in manufacturing uses machine learning and algorithms to analyze data, automate tasks, and optimize processes for increased efficiency, quality, and productivity, primarily through applications like predictive maintenance, digital twins, supply chain optimization, and intelligent quality control, moving factories towards smarter, data-driven 'Industry 4.0' operations. Under Quality Control, AI-powered vision systems detect defects faster and more accurately than humans, providing real-time feedback for root cause analysis. In Supply Chain Optimization, AI forecasts demand, optimizes inventory, manages logistics, and improves routing by analyzing market trends and data. Whereas, in Factory Automation & Robotics, AI enhances robots to perform complex, repetitive tasks autonomously, improving efficiency and safety. Also, in Energy Management, AI algorithms monitor and adjust energy consumption in real-time, reducing waste.

AI in Retail is Revolutionizing Shopping Habits

AI is also making waves in the retail industry, where it is changing the way consumers shop and how businesses operate by personalized shopping experiences. Retailers are using AI to analyze customer data, such as browsing history and purchasing behavior, to provide highly tailored recommendations like sophisticated algorithms suggest products for market potential, and in house product delivery and customer services. AI can predict demand patterns and automatically reorder items when stock levels run low to reduce the risk of stockouts and ensures that customers can always find what they're looking for. AI is also transforming the way brick-and-mortar stores interact with customers. Smart mirrors, for example, allow shoppers to virtually try on clothes.

AI in Finance enables Smarter Money Management

AI is also making its mark in the world of finance, where it is being used to streamline operations, improve decision-making, and offer more personalized services to consumers. One of the most prominent applications of AI in finance is in the area of fraud detection. In world of investments Robo-advisors use AI algorithms to manage investment portfolios and have gained popularity in recent years. These platforms offer low-cost, automated investment services that are accessible to a broader audience, including those who may not have the financial expertise or resources to manage their portfolios on their own. AI-driven trading platforms can also analyze market trends and make trades at lightning speed, offering a competitive advantage.

AI in Education helps Personalized Learning Experiences

Education is another field being dramatically reshaped by AI, with the potential to revolutionize how students learn and how educators teach. AI-powered platforms are enabling personalized learning experiences. AI is also being used to create intelligent tutoring systems that provide immediate feedback, helping students learn more independently. In addition to enhancing student learning, AI is helping teachers by automating administrative tasks like grading and scheduling. This allows educators to spend more time focusing on teaching and interacting with their students. Furthermore, AI tools can help identify students who may be struggling academically or emotionally, allowing for early intervention and support.

AI Shaping Future, 2026 and Beyond by ways like 'Multi-Modals moving beyond text-only Models', is a shift towards AI that understands visuals, voice, and facial expressions simultaneously, 'Agentic AI' systems now operate as independent entities that can execute multi-step workflows autonomously, such as handling complex customer service resolutions without human intervention, 'The Rise of Synthetic Data', as high-quality human-generated data becomes scarce, industries are pivoting to Synthetic Data which are Artificial Data sets that mimic real-world patterns and to continue training advanced models without ethical or resource limitations,

Critical Challenges & Considerations

However, the Critical Challenges & Considerations remain like Job Market Disruption, as AI is projected to create 97 million new roles in fields like Data Science, AI Maintenance, and Ethical Governance. Simultaneously, it is expected to displace roughly 83 million roles by 2030, Rising Ethics Gap, as systems become more autonomous, concerns of algorithmic bias, 'black box' decision-making, and data privacy have intensified, Data Quality & Scalability, by way of many technical hurdles in developing robust AI systems, Regulations of frameworks like EU or Indian or US AI Acts etc. are becoming standards to ensure transparency, safety, and accountability in high-risk AI deployments.

To Conclude, Artificial Intelligence is already playing a transformative role in our everyday lives, and its influence will only continue to grow in the years to come.

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Taruna Qasba

Sharika Bhagavati as Cosmic Principle and Cultural Deity in Kashmir

The Goddess as Territorial Divinity and Metaphysical Principle

Sharika Bhagavati occupies an eminent and multidimensional position within the religious traditions of Kashmir, where she is venerated simultaneously as supreme goddess, territorial protectress, metaphysical principle, and embodiment of sacred geography. She is most prominently associated with **Hari Parbat**, the celebrated hill rising above **Srinagar**, which functions not only as her principal seat of worship but also as a cosmological symbol deeply embedded in regional consciousness. In the theological imagination of Kashmir, Sharika is not regarded merely as a localized deity confined to a shrine; rather, she is understood as the animating Shakti that sustains the land, sanctifies the environment, and governs the cosmic order underlying existence. Her cult therefore provides an exceptionally rich example of how regional goddess traditions can integrate mythic narrative, philosophical abstraction, sacred topography, and living ritual into a unified religious system.

Within broader Indic goddess traditions, regional manifestations often represent localized forms of pan-Indian divinities such as Durga, Tripurasundari, or Mahadevi. Sharika Bhagavati participates in this wider theological framework yet retains a distinctive regional identity shaped by Kashmiri mythic memory, textual tradition, and environmental symbolism. She thus exemplifies a dual theological structure: universal in metaphysical essence and local in devotional expression. This duality is a defining feature of Kashmiri religious culture, which historically cultivated sophisticated philosophical speculation while simultaneously preserving deeply rooted folk and territorial forms of worship.

Scriptural and Mythological Foundations : The Narrative of Jalodbhava

The earliest and most authoritative narrative concerning Sharika Bhagavati's salvific manifestation is

preserved in the **Nilmata Purana**, a foundational Sanskrit text that documents the mythic origins, ritual customs, sacred sites, and theological traditions of the region. According to this account, the primordial condition of Kashmir was not terrestrial but aquatic: the land existed as a vast expanse of water known as **Satisar Lake**, inhabited by a formidable demon named Jalodbhava. This being is portrayed as a personification of chaos, obstruction, and untamed primordial force. His presence rendered the region uninhabitable and prevented the establishment of ordered life, thereby symbolizing the pre-cosmic state of undifferentiated existence that precedes divine intervention in many cosmological traditions.

The gods, unable to defeat the demon through ordinary means, invoked the power of the Divine Feminine. In response, the goddess manifested not in a terrifying or martial form but as a small bird—traditionally described as sparrow-like—thus emphasizing a theological motif central to Shakta traditions: ultimate power may assume subtle and unassuming forms. Carrying a pebble in her beak, she released it upon Jalodbhava's head. By virtue of her divine energy, the stone began to expand, increasing in size until it became a colossal mass that crushed the demon and terminated his destructive influence. The stone did not disappear after the act; instead, it remained and continued to grow,



ultimately assuming the form of the hill revered as her sacred seat. Through this narrative, myth is transformed into geography, and landscape itself becomes a materialized record of divine action.

Cosmological Symbolism

The Jalodbhava episode is not merely a narrative of demon-slaying but a theological allegory expressing profound metaphysical concepts. The demon represents undifferentiated materiality and chaotic potentiality, while the goddess symbolizes conscious order and creative intelligence. The pebble she carries functions as a symbol of concentrated Shakti—latent energy compressed into a minimal form. Its gradual expansion into a mountain reflects the philosophical doctrine that subtle reality (*sūkṣma*) unfolds into gross manifestation (*sthūla*). In other words, the myth dramatizes the process by which the unmanifest absolute becomes the manifest cosmos.

This symbolism resonates strongly with non-dual philosophical traditions historically associated with Kashmir, wherein the material universe is interpreted as the visible expression of a single underlying consciousness. The myth therefore serves not only as a sacred story explaining the origin of a landscape but also as a narrative illustration of metaphysical doctrine. The transformation from pebble to mountain encapsulates the transition from potentiality to actuality, from seed to cosmos, from divine intention to material existence.

Equally significant is the goddess's chosen form. By appearing as a small bird rather than a warrior goddess wielding weapons, she demonstrates that ultimate power transcends conventional notions of strength. The narrative thus conveys a theological principle: divine intelligence operates through precision rather than violence, through subtlety rather than spectacle. Such imagery distinguishes the Sharika myth from more martial goddess traditions and highlights the philosophical sophistication underlying Kashmiri religious symbolism.

Sacred Geography and the Ontology of Landscape

One of the most striking aspects of Sharika Bhagavati's cult is the identification of natural topography with divine embodiment. In this worldview, landscape is not inert matter but a living extension of sacred presence. Mountains, springs, stones, and forests are understood as conscious loci in which divine power resides. The hill associated with Sharika is therefore not simply dedicated to her; it is revered as her manifested body. This theological conception transforms geography into ontology: the land itself becomes sacred substance

rather than mere setting.

Such sacralization of terrain has profound implications for religious practice. Pilgrimage, circumambulation, and ritual ascent of the hill are not symbolic gestures but participatory acts through which devotees engage physically with divine presence. By traversing sacred space, the devotee reenacts mythic events and internalizes theological truths. In this way, landscape functions as a pedagogical medium transmitting religious knowledge through spatial experience rather than textual instruction.

The identification of deity and land also reinforces communal belonging. When territory is regarded as the embodiment of a goddess, attachment to place acquires theological depth. Devotion becomes inseparable from geography, and sacred space becomes a focal point for collective identity. The Sharika tradition thus exemplifies how mythic narrative can shape perceptions of environment and transform physical terrain into a sacred homeland.

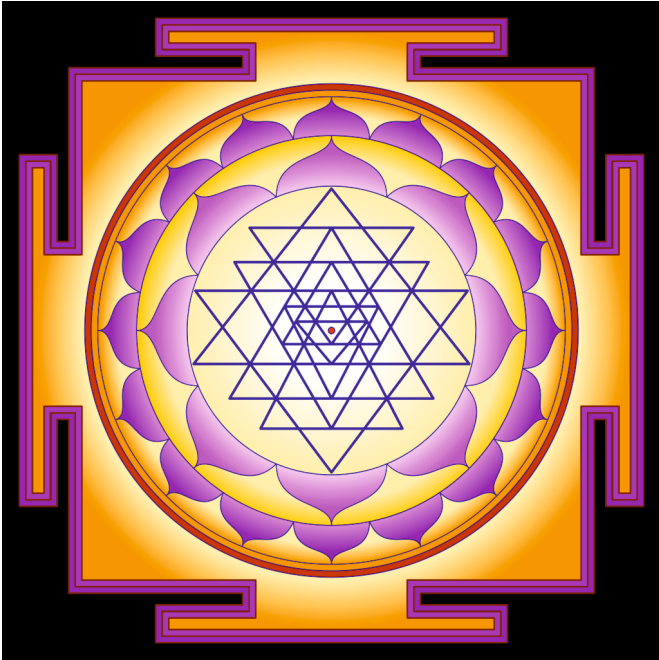
The Sri Chakra and the Philosophical Body of the Goddess

A defining theological dimension of Sharika Bhagavati's worship is her identification with the Sri Chakra, the intricate geometric diagram central to Shakta Tantric philosophy. Composed of interlocking triangles arranged concentrically around a central point, this diagram is interpreted as a complete cosmogram representing the structure, processes, and principles of the universe. Each element possesses symbolic significance: upward triangles signify transcendent consciousness, downward triangles represent creative energy, and their intersection expresses the inseparable unity of these forces. The central bindu denotes the absolute origin from which all multiplicity emerges and into which it ultimately dissolves.

In the Sharika tradition, this diagram is not merely emblematic; it is ontological. It is understood to be the goddess herself in geometric form, her abstract body rendered visible through sacred mathematics. Meditation upon it is therefore considered direct communion with the cosmic essence of the Divine Feminine. Devotees contemplate the diagram progressively, moving inward through successive enclosures that symbolize increasingly subtle levels of reality, culminating in union with the ultimate principle. Through this contemplative process, ritual practice becomes philosophical realization.

The prominence of geometric symbolism in this

tradition reveals the intellectual sophistication of Kashmiri religious culture, in which theology, mathematics, aesthetics, and metaphysics converge. The Sri Chakra serves simultaneously as ritual object,



philosophical diagram, cosmological map, and visual theology, demonstrating the capacity of sacred art to encode complex metaphysical insights.

Embodied Symbolism and Living Ritual Tradition

The continuing vitality of Sharika Bhagavati's worship is evident in living cultural practices that translate abstract theology into tangible and embodied form. Among devotees, sacred geometry associated with the goddess is incorporated into ornaments, ritual objects, and ceremonial designs, thereby materializing metaphysical concepts within everyday life. One particularly significant example is the traditional marital ornament known as the Dejhoor, worn by married Kashmiri Pandit women, whose triangular structure reflects the geometry of the Sri Chakra, the sacred diagram identified with the goddess herself. The Dejhoor is not merely an ornament of marital status but a theological emblem, visually encoding the union of cosmic principles represented in the interlocking triangles of the diagram and symbolizing the wearer's participation in a sacred cosmological order. Through this practice, metaphysical symbolism becomes embodied, allowing individuals to carry a representation of divine cosmology upon their person and transforming adornment into a form of lived theology.

Such embodied traditions demonstrate how philosophical ideas are transmitted not solely through

textual learning or scholastic discourse but through daily practice, material culture, and inherited custom. Symbolism thus becomes experiential rather than merely theoretical, ensuring continuity of belief across generations. Even in contexts of displacement, migration, or historical disruption, these portable sacred forms function as enduring markers of identity and memory, preserving theological meaning within the



intimate sphere of personal ritual life. In this way, the Dejhoor serves simultaneously as ornament, doctrine, and cultural archive, encapsulating within its form the continuity of Sharika Bhagavati's presence in both metaphysical thought and lived religious experience.

Sharika Bhagavati in Religious Thought and Cultural Memory

Sharika Bhagavati's significance extends beyond mythology, philosophy, or ritual; she occupies a central place in collective consciousness as guardian, liberator, and sustaining force. Her myth establishes her as savior of the land, her diagrammatic form identifies her with cosmic structure, and her presence in ritual life affirms her role as protector of community. In iconographic traditions and scriptural descriptions, she is further envisioned as the eighteen-armed (*Aṣṭādaśabhujā*) goddess, a form that symbolically expresses her manifold powers, attributes, and capacities for cosmic governance. The multiplicity of arms in such representations is not merely ornamental but theological, signifying the simultaneous exercise of

diverse divine functions—creation, preservation, protection, knowledge, and transcendence. She thus operates across multiple registers simultaneously—mythic, metaphysical, territorial, and devotional.

For scholars, her tradition offers an illuminating example of how regional goddess worship can articulate highly sophisticated metaphysical concepts while remaining rooted in specific geography and historical memory. The Sharika cult demonstrates that myth and philosophy are not separate domains but complementary modes of understanding reality, each reinforcing the other. Myth renders philosophy narratively accessible, while philosophy reveals the symbolic depth of myth, allowing the figure of the goddess to function simultaneously as narrative agent, metaphysical principle, and cultural symbol.

Sharika Bhagavati represents one of the most comprehensive theological archetypes within the religious heritage of Kashmir. She is at once mythic heroine, cosmic principle, sacred diagram, territorial guardian, and living cultural symbol. Through the narrative of Jalodbhava she embodies the triumph of order over chaos; through her identification with sacred geometry she expresses the structure of ultimate reality; through her association with sacred landscape she sanctifies the environment; and through enduring ritual traditions she sustains communal identity across time. Her cult therefore illustrates the remarkable capacity of regional religious traditions to integrate mythological narrative, philosophical speculation,



spatial symbolism, and lived devotion into a single coherent world view.

In the broader study of South Asian religions, Sharika Bhagavati stands as a powerful example of how the Divine Feminine may be conceptualized not only as an object of worship but as an ontological principle permeating land, cosmos, and consciousness alike.



“ This painting captures Kashmir’s emotional landscape through poignant symbolism. A solitary figure stitches a chinar leaf, bridging cultural heritage with quiet reflection. While mountain outlines and architectural sketches evoke a vibrant past, subtle tents at the base ground the piece in the reality of displacement and exile. Warm, nostalgic tones transform this collective history into a visual poem of belonging, loss, and an enduring bond with the valley “

Artist : Sanyukta Sadhu



Sudhir K Sopory

From Lament to Liberation: The Shaiva Wisdom of Devi Sharika

ॐ
HKG vs VKG —
A SHIFT IN CONSCIOUSNESS

✳ HKG (Hay Kya Gom?)	⚡ VKG (Von Kya Gav?)
✗ Fear of future	✓ Trust in divine flow
✗ Anxiety & helplessness	✓ Calm awareness
✗ Ego-driven reactions	✓ Inner stability
✗ Feeling out of control	✓ Acceptance with clarity
Leads to SUFFERING & CONTRACTION	Leads to FREEDOM & EXPANSION

↓

CORE MESSAGE
♥ LIFE DOES NOT CHANGE —
PERCEPTION TRANSFORMS EVERYTHING. ♥

✳ SHAIVA INSIGHT
Even sorrow becomes joy
when awareness expands.

CHOOSE AWARENESS OVER ANXIETY
Based on Sharika Devi's concept

In one of my earlier reflections, I briefly mentioned a striking utterance of Devi Sharika ji, the foremost disciple of Swami Lakshmanjoo: “AnghatTsen” — “Perceive darkness.” The phrase itself reflects her spiritual stature. Devi Sharika may rightly be regarded as a silent saint.

She spoke rarely, avoided discourses, and never assumed the role of a teacher in the conventional sense. Yet when she did speak, her words emerged as brief, crystalline insights, carrying the depth of direct

realization rather than conceptual learning.

Her spiritual utterances (vāks) and her minimal yet profound exchanges with her Guru, spoken in Kashmiri, were carefully preserved by Sushri Prabha Devi and later compiled and translated by Dr. Neerja Mattoo in *Yogini of Kashmir*.

These utterances, simple in expression, reveal a consciousness established in inner stillness and recognition (pratyabhijñā), the hallmark of Kashmir Shaivism. On one occasion, a disciple burdened by family difficulties approached Devi Sharika seeking solace.

She responded gently and succinctly, “There is no cause for worry. God will be kind to you.” She then added an observation drawn from everyday Kashmiri speech, revealing a profound spiritual psychology. One should choose VKG instead of HKG.

In colloquial Kashmiri, HKG—Haye Kya Gaum—means “What will happen now?” It expresses fear, helplessness, and anxiety before the unknown. VKG—Van Kya Gav—means “How does it matter?” It conveys surrender, trust, and repose in divine will. These two expressions point to two entirely different inner orientations. One tightens the knot of suffering; the other loosens it.

Most human beings, when confronted with uncertainty, instinctively fall into the HKG mode. This reaction arises from deep identification with the limited self—body, mind, roles, and expectations. Kashmir Shaiva texts describe this condition as āṇava-mala, the primal contraction that makes the infinite Self appear finite. From this contraction arises fear, because the ego imagines itself as a separate doer responsible for outcomes.

VKG represents a different state of awareness. It is not resignation, nor indifference, but a subtle recognition that life unfolds within a larger intelligence. As the SpandaKārikā states, “Yatra yatra mano yātitatratatra samādhayaḥ”—wherever the mind moves, there lies the



possibility of absorption. When awareness expands, even difficult circumstances are no longer experienced as threats but as movements within consciousness itself.

From a modern neuro-psychological perspective, this shift is equally significant. HKG corresponds to a stress-driven state in which fear circuits dominate perception, narrowing awareness and intensifying suffering. VKG reflects a regulated state of the nervous system, allowing clarity, patience, and trust to arise. Faith, in this sense, is not merely belief but a stabilizing inner orientation cultivated through awareness.

The question naturally arises: how does one move from HKG to VKG? Kashmir Shaivism does not advocate escape from life but transformation of perception. This is beautifully expressed in the Śivastotrāvalī of Utpaladeva:

*Dukhāniapisukhāyante, viṣamāpīamṛtyate
Mokṣāyate ca saṃsāraḥ, yatra mārgahsaśaṅkaraḥ* Even sorrow becomes joy, poison turns into nectar, and the world itself becomes liberation for those who walk the path of Śaṅkara.

This verse encapsulates the Shaiva vision. Liberation does not require the rejection of worldly life. Rather, it

arises when one's relationship with experience changes. When awareness is anchored in the Self, suffering loses its absolute character. The same experience that once caused agitation becomes a means of inner expansion.

Such transformation requires a subtle form of detachment. Not detachment from duties or relationships, but from exclusive identification with the body-mind complex. The Vijñāna Bhairava repeatedly points to this inner shift, urging the practitioner to rest in the space between thoughts, sensations, and emotions. In doing so, one begins to sense the distinction between the witnessing consciousness and its transient contents.

True attachment, then, is not to external objects but to awareness itself. Physical engagement with the world continues, but emotional entanglement gradually loosens. When this maturity arises, even loss or uncertainty does not destabilize the inner axis. VKG becomes a lived reality rather than a consoling phrase.

As Prof. H. S. Shivaprakash, former professor of JNU, whom I have known for many years, observes in his book "Guru – Ten Doors to Ancient Wisdom",

There are two broad spiritual approaches: one that restrains desire and another that transforms it. The Shaiva path belongs to the latter. It does not suppress experience but refines one's participation in it. What once bound the individual becomes a doorway to recognition.

In this light, VKG reflects the voice of the Self remembering itself. HKG belongs to the contracted ego struggling to control life. The movement from one to the other is the very journey of sādhanā.

Devi Sharika embodied this wisdom effortlessly. Without preaching or elaboration, she pointed to a way of being rooted in trust, stillness, and inner freedom. Her words, and her silence even more so, remind us that spiritual maturity expresses itself not in grand declarations but in a quiet confidence that whatever arises is held within a larger order.

May we, through awareness and grace, learn to shift from the agitation of HKG to the calm clarity of VKG, and in doing so, walk the subtle path that Devi Sharika lived and revealed—silently, simply, and profoundly.

Sudhir K Sopory



Audesh Bhat

Will Exodus eventually dilute the gene pool of the Kashmiri Pandit Community

In the previous edition of the Kashmir Education Culture and Science Society's (KECSS) annual magazine *ShuhulTaaph* (2025, pp. 108–110), I explored the question of our Aryan ancestry. In that article, I discussed how genetic evidence—particularly from the Y-chromosome and mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA)—appears to support the belief that a significant proportion of Kashmiri Pandit (KP) ancestry may be linked to lineages associated with the so-called Aryans, though such claims must always be treated with caution until conclusively proven. What also emerged from the discussion was something equally important: the genetic makeup of contemporary KPs is not simple or uniform. Rather, it reflects a complex history, shaped by multiple layers of ancestry. In many ways, this complexity itself tells a story—that Kashmir may have historically served as a meeting ground for different waves of migration arriving from the north, west, and south.

If these ancient migrations helped shape the genetic mosaic that we see in the KP community today, another question naturally follows: how are the events of the last three decades, particularly the exodus of KPs from the Valley, shaping our gene pool now and in the future? This question forms the central theme of the present article. When Prof. Bamaezai, President of KECSS, asked whether I would be interested in writing on the topic “Will our gene pool eventually dilute post-exodus?”, I accepted the invitation without hesitation. The question goes far beyond academic curiosity. It touches upon something deeply personal and collective—our identity as KPs. For a community that has already endured the loss of homeland and the gradual fading of many cultural traditions, the possibility of changes to our genetic identity adds another layer to the concerns about our long-term continuity as a distinct community. However, when I began looking for scientific data to address this question, I soon realized that the task was not straightforward. There are currently no systematic surveys or formal genetic studies that specifically estimate the extent to which the KP gene pool has changed post exodus. Without such direct evidence, it becomes difficult to quantify ideas such as “dilution” or “decline” of a gene pool in precise scientific terms.

Nevertheless, the absence of direct data does not mean the question cannot be explored. By looking at patterns observed in other populations around the world—communities that have experienced displacement, migration, or demographic changes—we can gain useful insights into how gene pools evolve over time. Using these comparative perspectives, along with informal observations from within our own community, it is possible to reflect on how the current social and demographic transformations may influence the genetic future of Kps. Additionally, as Prof. Bamezai has pointed out in his article in the latest edition of the *Indian Society of Human Genetics* bi-annual newsletter (2026, pp. 7–10, “Genetics and Genomics for Health and Society”), the modern era of genomics is opening new windows into our past. Advances in genetic research are increasingly helping scientists reconstruct the historical events—such as migrations, population mixing, and demographic changes—that have shaped the human gene pool over thousands of years. At the same time, these studies are also providing clues about how gene pools may continue to evolve in the future and how such changes could influence our susceptibility or resistance to various diseases. If similar genomic investigations were carried out within the Kashmiri Pandit community, they could potentially offer valuable insights into our own population history. More importantly, such studies might help us better understand how the events surrounding the exodus—and the demographic shifts that followed—may be shaping our gene pool today and in the generations to come.

Before we proceed further, it may be helpful—especially for readers who do not come from a background in biology—to briefly understand a few basic concepts. What exactly do scientists mean when they talk about a gene pool? What are the forces that can change or reshape it over time? And importantly, are changes in a gene pool always harmful, or can they sometimes bring benefits as well? Understanding these ideas will allow us to look at the larger question with greater clarity: how demographic shifts, migration, and social change may gradually shape the genetic landscape of our community in the decades to come.

What is a Gene Pool?

First, what is a gene? A gene is a segment of DNA that contains the instructions for producing a biologically active molecule. In most cases, this molecule is RNA, which either performs a function directly or serves as a template for the production of a protein. Through these molecules, genes ultimately influence the structure, function, and characteristics of living organisms. Gene pool in simple terms refers to the complete collection of genes present within a population. Every individual carries thousands of genes inherited from their parents, and when we consider all the genetic variants present in all individuals of a community together, we refer to this collective genetic reservoir as the gene pool. A gene pool therefore reflects the genetic identity of a population. Some genes are shared by almost everyone in the group, while others occur only in certain families or lineages. Over generations, the composition of this pool can change as people are born, migrate, marry outside their community, or sometimes remain genetically isolated.

It is important to note that a gene pool is not static and evolves with time, like culture and language. The diversity of this gene pool plays a vital role in the population's ability to adapt to changing environments, resist diseases, and avoid genetic bottlenecks that could harm future generations. A larger and more diverse gene pool generally increases a population's chances of survival and evolutionary success. In fact, the history of any population—its migrations, interactions with other communities, and demographic changes—is often recorded, in subtle ways, in its gene pool. For relatively small and historically endogamous communities like the KPs, the gene pool tends to show certain distinctive features. However, these features can gradually change when the demographic structure of the community changes, particularly through migration, dispersal, or inter-marriage.

Factors that influence or change it

Several biological and social factors can influence the composition of a population's gene pool over time. Some of the most important ones include:

Migration: From earliest 'out of Africa' human migration to the modern global movements, migration has not only influenced cultural, economic, and social landscapes but has also had a profound effect on the contemporary genetic makeup of human population. One of the most significant effects of migration on the gene pool is the increase or decrease in the genetic diversity if the migration is inwards or outwards, respectively. When individuals from different ethnic populations come into contact post migration, they often interbreed, bringing together distinct genetic traits. This process, known as gene flow, introduces new alleles (gene variants) into the gene pool of the receiving population. Over time, this

mixing of genetic material enriches the overall genetic diversity, which can be beneficial for the population as a whole. However, if the migration is outwards, this will lead to loss of genetic diversity, therefore can potential harm the population. Living organisms when live under certain environmental conditions for long a period of time eventually develop adaptations to that particular environment, and when migrate to a different environment, willingly or forcefully will eventually lose those trait, and this will happen quickly if they interbreed with ethnically different individuals. Very good example to understand this phenomenon are the people who migrated to areas with high altitudes, like Tibet, have developed genetic adaptations that allow them to cope with lower oxygen levels. Likewise, people who live colder climate conditions have developed genetic adaptations to better handle low temperatures, such as changes in body size or metabolic rates.

Marriage Patterns: Communities that traditionally practice endogamy (marrying within the community) tend to maintain relatively stable gene pools. However, when marriages increasingly occur outside the community, new genetic variants enter the population, gradually altering the existing gene pool.

Population Size: Smaller populations are more vulnerable to genetic changes. Random fluctuations in gene frequencies—what geneticists call genetic drift—can have a stronger impact when the number of individuals in a community is limited.

Demographic Events: Events such as migration, displacement, or large-scale social disruptions can dramatically reshape population structure. These changes may indirectly influence the genetic composition of future generations. Our exodus from the valley represents one such demographic event. The dispersal of the community across different regions of India and abroad has inevitably changed patterns of settlement, interaction, and marriage. Over time, these social changes may also influence the genetic structure of the community.

Are Changes in a Gene Pool Always Harmful?

The idea of a “diluting” gene pool often raises concerns because it is sometimes associated with the loss of a community's distinct identity. However, from a purely biological perspective, changes in a gene pool are not necessarily harmful. In fact, genetic diversity can often be beneficial. A diverse gene pool can increase a population's resilience to diseases, improve adaptability to changing environments, and reduce the likelihood of certain hereditary disorders that sometimes become more common in very small or highly endogamous populations. At the same time, for communities with strong historical and cultural continuity, maintaining a certain degree of

genetic distinctiveness may also carry symbolic importance. The concern, therefore, is not purely biological but also cultural and sociological.

Will the Kashmiri Pandit Gene Pool Really Dilute Post-Exodus?

The question of whether the KP gene pool will “dilute” after the exodus is both emotionally charged and scientifically complex. On the surface, the concern seems straightforward: a small community dispersed across different regions, increasingly interacting and marrying outside the community in large numbers (>50%, Source: The Tribune article 'Inter-caste marriages: Kashmiri Pandit youth breaking taboos' by Sumit Hakhoo, 2017), its traditional social boundaries, might gradually lose the genetic features that once characterized it. However, when examined from a scientific perspective, the answer is not entirely simple. Another concern is the declining gene pool, which is less complex but equally serious.

First, it is important to recognize that no gene pool remains unchanged forever. Human populations have always evolved through migration, interaction, and social change. Even the genetic composition of KPs today is the result of centuries—perhaps millennia—of historical processes. As mentioned earlier, Kashmir itself appears to have been a meeting point of multiple migrations, which means that the KP gene pool has never been completely isolated.

The exodus from Kashmir in late 1980's and early 1990's is nothing new, as KPs have faced such similar situation under the Muslim rulers, forcing them either to convert or to flee the valley.

However, as has been noted by Sh. T.N. Dhar (Kundan) in his article entitled “*Marriages, outside The Community*” (<https://www.ikashmir.net/kundan/marriage.html>), these earlier KP migrants sought to preserve their cultural identity by restricting the matrimonial alliance within the community, despite being spread throughout India. What has changed significantly after the exodus is the demographic structure of the community.

Before the 1990s, KPs lived largely within a geographically concentrated region—the Kashmir Valley. Such geographic proximity naturally reinforced social networks, cultural practices, and marriage patterns within the community. Following the exodus, however, the community became widely dispersed across India and in many parts of the world. This dispersal has inevitably altered the social environment in which the next generations grow up.

One consequence of this dispersion is the increased likelihood of marriages outside the community. While many KP families continue to prefer marriages within the community, the realities of living in scattered locations, smaller local population clusters, and broader social

interaction mean that inter-community marriages are becoming more common over time. From a genetic perspective, such marriages introduce new genetic variants into the population or remove the existing variants from the population, gradually reshaping the existing gene pool. Outside community marriage is not the only issue that is casting a shadow on our ancestral gene pool, small population size, the preference for late marriage, single child, infertility issues are among many other issue that are changing our gene pool. Smaller populations are more susceptible to genetic changes over generations.

If the effective population size of a community declines significantly, certain genetic lineages may become rare or disappear simply due to demographic chance. This process, known as genetic drift, has been observed in many small populations around the world.

It is equally important not to view these changes solely in terms of “loss.” Genetic mixing does not necessarily imply biological disadvantage. In many cases, increased genetic diversity can actually strengthen a population by reducing the prevalence of certain hereditary conditions that sometimes become more common in highly endogamous groups. Therefore, the future of the KP gene pool is likely to be shaped by a balance between continuity and change. If strong community networks, cultural identity, and social connections continue to encourage marriages within the community, a significant portion of the existing genetic structure may persist. On the other hand, if demographic dispersion and social integration lead to a higher frequency of inter-community marriages, gradual genetic mixing will naturally occur.

Ultimately, the question of “gene pool dilution” may be less about strict biological definitions and more about how a community chooses to preserve its identity in a changing world. Culture, language, traditions, and collective memory often play a far greater role in defining a community than genetics alone. While genes carry traces of our past, it is our shared values, heritage, and cultural continuity that truly sustain the identity of a people. In that sense, the future of the KP community will not be determined solely by the biology of its gene pool, but by the strength of its cultural bonds and the collective commitment to preserving its unique heritage across generations.

In the case of the KP community, the question is not simply whether the gene pool will change—it inevitably will, as all human populations change over time. The real question is how rapidly these changes may occur and how they intersect with the broader challenges of preserving cultural identity, traditions, and community cohesion. Understanding this balance between biological change and cultural continuity is essential when discussing the future of the KP community in the decades ahead.



Rajinder Premi

A sacred Festival of Kashmiri Pandits

The Happy Valley is a land of vistas so lavish in its prospects and surpassing interest and beauty, a land where wonderful contrasts and amazing variety can be seen, a land of utmost miracles of bountiful nature, a land of Saints.

The Kashmiri Pandit is famous for its hospitality. Pay a visit to him and he would treat you to the point of worship. It is not uncommon that he will offer food prepared for himself to a guest whose chances bring him unexpectedly to his home and will remain hungry until fresh food is prepared for himself.

There are enormous festivals which are celebrated with great fervor. Enthusiasm is always there. Among them is Navreh, which Kashmiri Pandits solemnise as the dawn of their new year. It is also celebrated as the first day of Navratra.

Navreh, the Kashmiri New Year, is a vibrant festival showcasing the rich cultural heritage of the Kashmiri Pandit community. It's a time of great joy, renewal, and spiritual rejuvenation.

Preparations begin a day before with thorough cleaning and decorating of homes with flowers, lanterns, and intricate designs made from rice flour. A sacred Thal is prepared with items like:

- Unhusked rice (representing abundance)
- Bread (symbolizing nourishment)
- Coin and rupees (prosperity and good fortune)
- Pen case (knowledge and wisdom)
- Curd (purity and sweetness)
- Cooked rice (gratitude and blessings)
- Flowers (beauty and fragrance)

- Walnuts (prosperity and good health)
- Jantri (almanac, symbolizing the cycle of time)
- New (Hindu calendar)

These items are kept overnight and viewed first thing in the morning, seeking blessings for the new year.

Each member picks up walnuts, which are later dropped in a river or sacred spring after bathing.

Before Navratra (Navreh), the auspicious day has been chosen for taking bath (Kalchalun in Kashmiri), especially for newly married women.

Bath is to be taken in the parental home and they come with the salt pack (noon), Athur, and some money (Adgat) on the same day or another day according to the convenience.

The same is followed on ZangTrai, third day of Navreh. Every lady wears new clothes and married ones' Athur, which is considered as one of the sacred and auspicious.

Sons-in-law of the family are invited and a sumptuous feast is honoured in his honour. Son-in-law and daughter are blessed with Adgat (money) and noon lifaf (packed salt), which is popularly known as Zang (Shagun).

The celebrations involve traditional practices like Kalchalun, strengthening family bonds and showcasing the community's rich culinary expertise through dishes like PuranPoli and Haakh.

Navreh marks the beginning of the Kashmiri New Year, a time for introspection and spiritual growth.

People visit temples, offer prayers, and seek blessings for the upcoming year.

These customs reflect the community's deep-rooted traditions and values.



Rajeshwar Dhar

JK UT Undergoing Socio-Eco-Cultural Renaissance

**"My'eChhamAashPaghich, PagahShol'eDuniya;
DohasGaashHu're Gul, Te Gulzar Prazlan;
Zameen'sTeSar'eLagey, TeSabzaarPrazlan"**

*"I Hope for Tomorrow, When the World will be Beautiful,
When the Days will be Radiant;
When Flowers will Bloom, And Gardens will Blossom;
When the Earth will be Bubbling with Hope,
And Meadows will Shimmer with Dreams."
Rev Pandit Dina Nath Kaul 'Nadim'*



77th Republic Day Celebrations at Clock Tower, Lal Chowk, Srinagar

Jammu and Kashmir is a beautiful region, rich in natural resources and inheritor of an enlightened civilization based on a unique cultural diversity that readily accepts an amalgamation of ideas and thoughts. No Wonder, it caught the covetous eyes of an power that wishes to wrest control of the infinite assets of the region by force by Neighboring States, to break inter-faith harmony, to break 'Kashmiriyat'- An exceptional concept of blend of The Sufi Moorings and The Shaivite Spiritualism, wherein,

different faiths merged seamlessly into a homogenous community with Common Language, Common Dress Code, Common Eating Habits and AShared Culture.

Today, we have a situation where foreign sponsored terrorism has waned with restoration of normal activity in Kashmir. Infiltration incidences have reduced to well below 15% since 2019 and almost all Pakistani Infiltrated Terrorists have been neutralized, till date, compared to past era, The Union Government and the State Government have put in place an ambitious plan to revive the economy. Education, which has always been the mainstay of the people of Jammu and Kashmir, is gaining international standards with the best institutions coming up across the Union Territory. Similarly, other core sectors like Infrastructure, Health, Tourism and Employability of the youth are gaining momentum.

Six years after the Abrogation of Article 370, Jammu & Kashmir has seen marked improvements in Security, Investments, and Administrative Integration. Abrogation of Art 370 is seen as a turning point for Political Restructuring, Security Measures, Economic Changes and Cultural Renaissance in the region, albeit, some concerns persist both Administratively and Politically. Political activity has resumed in J&K after years of stagnation. Panchayat Elections and formation of Political Parties have occurred although full Statehood, and Legislative Powers remain curtailed, as suitable for the strategic decisions of the GOI. However, Challenges if any, are being overcome, particularly in Balancing Central Governance, ensuring Sustained Peace, and Fostering Inclusive Development. Hence, after decades of indoctrination through the use of force, foreign militants, their ideologues and masters have failed to break the bond that has existed between the religious communities in Kashmir. Tourist Footfall surged since 2019 to over 10 Crores by 2025. Centre and UT continue to promote J&K as a Safe and Secure destination which has been mainstay of Jammu and Kashmir Development.

JK UT and Implications for Governance, Socio-Economic Transformation, Tourism Boost, Cultural

Revivalism and National Integration

Introduction of Three-Tier Panchayati Raj in JK Union and No of Districts have increased from 14 to 20 (10 each in Kashmir and Jammu). Shift To Direct Control By Centre Enhanced Administrative Efficiency.

- Decentralized Governance with Panchayats Boosted Grassroots Participation.
- Improved Law and Order with Counter-Insurgency Success.
- Reduced Infiltration Contributed to Border Security.
- Safety Perception induced for Critical to Maintaining Momentum.
- Real Estate, Hospitality, and IT Sectors continue to see Investor Interest.
- Increase In Youth Employment and Industrial Training Program.
- Businesses, across India contributing In Economic Development Across JK Regions.
- Jammu & Kashmir Is Branded as A Global Tourism Destination. Revival of Cultural Festivals and Public Engagement,

Major infrastructure Developments

Investment of over 10000 Crores, Kashmir alone saw Investment of about 5000 Crores till date in JK UT. Under JK UT Industrial Policy 21-30, over 5 lakh Crores. Investments are proposed across sectors like Health, Education, IT, and Infrastructure with Employment Generation for about 1 Lac Locals. There is growth of over 300% in startups, with about 1000 registered Startups by 2025 and about 2000 Industrial Units of Products and Services have been established. New Air Way and Railway Systems have been well connected to Kashmir Valley, now, with rest of India thus reducing Passenger and Logistic Cost and Time. New Central Sector Schemes (NCSS 2021) with an outlay of Rs 28,400 crore were introduced for industrial development, which has been fully utilized. In Real Estate & Tourism, major projects include over 1000 crore proposed investment by Real Estates groups for a Mega-Malls and IT Towers in Srinagar and Jammu. 46 new industrial estates are under development to facilitate further investments.

Major Policy Reforms and Infrastructure

Introduction of J&K integrated National Single Window Portal with the National Platform, achieving 97% compliance with the Business Reform Action Plan (BRAP). In Infrastructure, Significant investments are aimed at Power Sector Reforms (installing 5.74 lakh smart meters) and logistics (improving Jammu-Srinagar connectivity). Various policies like J&K Industrial Policy 2021-30, Industrial Land Allotment Policy 2021-30, and J&K Start-Up Policy 2024-27 are currently active.

Boost to Education and Healthcare

49 New Government Degree Colleges (including Engineering Colleges) have been established and made

functional. IIT Jammu and IIM Jammu began functioning from their permanent campuses. Centres for Innovation, Invention, Incubation and Training (CIIT) were established at Govt. Polytechnic Jammu and Govt. Polytechnic Baramulla, 7 New

Government Medical Colleges (GMCs) have been operationalized. 45 nursing and paramedic colleges were established till date. AIIMS Jammu (Vijaypur) was established, with its academic session made operational. 2 State Cancer Institutes and 15 nursing colleges have been taken up or operationalized. Ayushhman Bharat Under the Prime Minister's Development Package and 29 projects (including health and education sectors) have been completed or substantially completed.

Land Reforms and Policy Shifts

Following the 2019 reorganization, several old J&K land laws, including, the Big Landed Estates Abolition Act of 1950 (which was the cornerstone of "land-to-the-tiller" reforms), were repealed or adapted to allow Non-Domiciles to purchase Non-Agricultural land. The J&K government introduced the Land Grant Rules 2022, which replaced the 1960 Rules. These Rules terminated old leases (except for residential ones) and required a fresh auction for leasing land, impacting commercial and tourist properties. The 'Roshni Act' (J&K State Lands Act, 2001), which had previously transferred State Land Ownership to occupants, was repealed and subsequently scrapped by the High Court, triggering a massive drive to reclaim unauthorized land.

Above All, Temple Land Protection and Reforms

Administration to Protect unattended Temples and Shrines from land mafia encroachments and ensure mutations are made in the name of the Deity, not private individuals (mahants/priests). Several Temples in the Kashmir Valley, which were abandoned after the 1990 exodus of Kashmiri Pandits, are being restored to the State's Custody to prevent illegal sale or lease as these properties belong to the Deity. Immediate implementation of a comprehensive "J&K Temples and Shrines Bill" to manage these Properties and Prevent further encroachment is in the offing. **Thus, Abrogation of Art 370 Aligned Rightly with JK and Rest of Indian Union !!!**

Tailpiece

“Blossoms are Everywhere, in Orchards and on Hills;
and Drunken Sings the Bulbul - A Garden is our Land !
Mahjoor, Our Motherland Is the Loveliest on Earth, Shall
we not Love her Best !
- A Garden is our Land !”

Rev [Ghulam Ahmad Mahjoor](#)

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Plaksha Shali

To be Real or to be Heavenly?



Humans are delicate. Over centuries, all species have changed, rather advanced, but some have also been completely wiped off the surface of Earth. However, most have survived due to the good old concept of evolution. When, most of Earth's nature follows the rule of variation, or in fact "survival of the fittest", humans have only been seen to reduce their life expectancy. If it isn't obvious, this aims to be a clear reference to the ideal quality of life that humans are deprived of, either by circumstance or choices of their own.

Thus, excuse us for staring at a dead tree for hours and hallucinating vividly. If it isn't clear, which it usually isn't to non-readers, I was talking about a book. Do you know how much beauty there is left to see, in books of life and stories meant to be? Well, how would you know; I just said we're lacking the ideal quality of life. I am possibly the weirdest reader you'll find. I pick a book and finish at least two in one go, or go without reading for months. Is it just me, or did I just define each reader I know? You know how, when life gives you lemons and you end up making lemonade. Similarly, when life gives you its worst battles, boring times, or hidden signs, you must ditch reality and start looking at that corpse of a tree again. Because even in afterlife, trees are still keeping you alive, if not with oxygen but with a sense of emotion and escapism. So, let's raise a toast, to the book I love the most in the whole world: The Palace of Illusions (I have a very different

experience with each book, love can be a strong word sometimes, but this one is quite special).

You know, the irony here is that the first time this book interested me, it was when I was scrolling through Instagram. And one of the major reasons I call this book special is because it was a journey of ups and downs. I liked the book as it started, then began judging the main character towards the middle, and absolutely adored the ending.

The book is based on the epic mythological battle of Mahabharata but from Draupadi's perspective. And she's someone who not only became the first of women to change the course of history but also became a reason for me to read the book. It occurred to me, if I had to learn of Mahabharata, why not from a woman's perspective? Finally, men have got a lot to say in general and Chitra Banerjee has done some exceptional work in channelizing Draupadi in her book.

This book started where all books usually start: the first page. In all sincerity, it was the first of some brilliant pages written in history. Draupadi, Panchaali or who you might call the "Girl who wasn't invited", emerged from a sacrificial fire that was going to birth only her brother. She was a gift, a gift beyond desire, a girl who would change the course of history; only she didn't believe it. She loved listening to the story of her birth, but hated how less of a meaning her name held: Draupadi, meaning, daughter of Drupad. She believed, for a daughter who would hold immense importance in the future, as predicted, she deserved a name that spoke of her and not of who she was at birth. My favourite dynamic throughout the read was between Panchaali and Krishna. Krishna became a friend who we all need and his charming mystery gave depth to things that were left unsaid. Somehow, he always knew the right time for everything, and his answers always reflected his ability to make Panchaali think for herself.

Panchaali had a lot of firsts. She was the first of women to have had 5 husbands: The Pandavas. She was also the

first of reasons why the Mahabharata happened. At her swayamwar, she had a choice to make. She really liked Karna, but felt a sense of unease, as if something was about to go terribly wrong. So, she ended up posing him with a question that created a rift between the two, till at least afterlife. Arjun (the best of warriors of the Pandavas), dressed as a Brahmin became her groom. Although, it seems like a choice made by Panchaali, it always brings up a question of: choice & fate. Was it fate that made Panchaali choose the Brahmin or was it her choice that designed the future? It makes us wonder whether things are already planned or are we making them happen. Once, Panchaali visited a sage in hopes of learning of her true purpose. She was made to sit in a circle, where she saw two figures, one being the sage and the other appearing to have an elephant's head. The hint at Ganesh sitting with the sage, probably Valmiki, focuses on how things were already written in the manner they were supposed to happen. And how Panchaali stood as the unknown in a world of known. She wondered if asking the playwright to give away the climax was fair...but here, she was a mere chronicler and ultimately only the witness and not the actors know the truth.

It was in Duryodhan's court, where the highest level of dishonour took place. It was the moment that made Panchaali the woman that we now know about. Over a mere game, that held too much importance in those times, Panchaali was disrobed in the assembly and not one person she believed in came to protect her from the humiliation. Except, Krishna. As, Banerjee describes in the book, his love was a balm, moonlight in a parched landscape. Panchaali's strength to endure that mortification came from Krishna. This incident of the court, somehow became the reason for the battle of Mahabharata. Makes me wonder, where did the urge to fight for a woman's honour go in contemporary times? Draupadi saw the entire war, through her own eyes, as a blessing she took from a sage. Call it a blessing or a curse, she was drained of watching it, took most of her energy and made her watch the death of her loved ones. She watched Karna die, die at the hands of his own brothers: the Pandavas, who were unknown to this fact. But she knew, but never felt a place to tell them. After the war, Panchaali and her husbands started climbing Mount Kailash, in hope of finding the gates of heaven. You know who slipped and died first? Panchaali. Her mistake? She hadn't loved all her husbands equally, maybe, somewhere, never at all. Or what I like to believe, she finally had completed her purpose. As death touched her, she saw the enigmatic Krishna, who made her feel warm and reminded her of when she was about to emerge from the fire. He had told her of what she had to do. He had said that she was an instrument and he the doer. Panchaali questioned, "What if I forget?" Krishna knew

she would, and she would have to suffer the tricks of this world, but at the time of her death, he'll remind her of it. And he kept his promise. Panchaali has always been questioning, has always been curious. As a woman born into a man's world, to question is to strive to live. As life slipped away from her soul, she asked Krishna if she was dying and if he was truly divine? Krishna with his heavenly words said that it could be called death but it could also be walking or an intermission. And when it comes to being divine, he was! And she was too...

That day, Draupadi was not someone's daughter or wife or admirer. She was not someone whose fate was decided when she was born. She was uncontainable, fierce, a survivor, beyond gender and name. She no longer had feelings of shame, ego, or revenge. She had forgiven, she was buoyant. For the first time, she was the true Panchaali!

I told you she's had multiple firsts. In afterlife, her hand was clasped by a solid grip: Karna. Their rift did end in afterlife. Their Palace awaited, their chance to a happily ever after. Banerjee perfectly summarised when she said that everything dissolved like fireflies in a summer evening. As I flipped the last page, and closed the book shut, I sat with myself for a minute or two. Draupadi came to be known as Panchaali because she wanted to. She became a person of herself. Her life wasn't defined by men around her or by fates written around fire. She was the instrument but she was never a puppet. And an instrument only plays with the harmonies in itself. She suffered pain, humiliation, she harboured ego and revenge, and even when her heart ached, she let go of her love. And she left us with, not what she was but, what she became. Maybe, she left us with, even a question. To be real is to be divine, and is it also that makes us all, truly Panchaali?





Prisha Dwivedi

Importance of Financial Literacy in Indian Education System

From scripting the Vedas and Upanishads to drafting the longest written constitution the world has ever witnessed, from a handful of revolutionaries to the largest democracy to ever exist, from visualizing outer space to successfully landing the first ever spacecraft on the moon's south pole.

We, the people of India, have come a long way as a civilization, as a culture and as a community.

Embodying the youth of this glorious land, it's unfortunate that despite declaring independence 78 years back, it is still imparted in our mentalities that prodigious ambition is of being doctors and IAS officers not of becoming the leading farmer or shoe maker.

You might wonder how all this links to the topic at hand. Well, you see, it echoes the stark reality of our education system, which is built on a foundation where we endorse nurturing students into job seekers rather than job givers.

Entrepreneurship and skill education are now a part of many global curriculums. Yet there is an essential component missing from the folds of our own textbooks.

Financial literacy, a must for curating a sustainable and inclusive society.

Consider interest compounding, inflation or risk diversification — these are unlikely to go out of fashion anytime soon. 35 US states have mandated enrollment in a personal finance class before high school graduation.

This groundbreaking decision is enhancing the lives of 72% of all US students.

I've heard all over, through my family, teachers and peers, that young minds must be made up to date with the world's stance in order to make informed political choices in the future but isn't one also required to be taught about finance and economic development before venturing into a complex money-minded world?

Just like one is provided training even before applying for a license, ask yourself today, how can we expect our students to do their taxes or have a broad understanding of the annual budget, without empowering them with vital learning resources?

We whole-heartedly encourage quiz marathons, model united nations and coding competitions but why not model stock trading?

Today, I, on behalf of 1.2 billion youth, urge all the educationists and politicians worldwide, please rise from your slumber.

It's time we collaborate to bring about an uprising in education universally for the betterment of society, influencing not just me, not just you, but transcending and transforming our world at large.

*Prisha Dwivedi
X (2025-26)*

Lotus Valley International School



Dr. Ashok Ogra

When Memory Becomes Our Homeland

BOOK REVIEW by Ashok Ogra, Some stories speak quietly but stay with you for a long time. They tell of homes that were left behind, people who continue to wait, with memories that never fade. The twelve stories in *U-TURN AND OTHER STORIES* by a noted writer and broadcaster (DD), Gauri Shankar Raina, originally written in Kashmiri, go beyond the idea of exile. They explore how people preserve dignity, humour, and affection even when their sense of belonging weakens or disappears.

Raina's stories depict the everyday life of Kashmir-its natural beauty, social bonds, conflicts, and quiet strength. Using simple plots and realistic characters, he portrays a society marked as much by kindness and endurance as by pain and separation.

The book has been translated into English by Prof. Pankaj Bhan, a well-known scholar and critic. His translation is faithful and sensitive. For him, translation is not simply about finding the right word-it is about transferring emotions, rhythm, and culture from one language to another. His work ensures that the flavour of Kashmiri life and its emotional texture are not lost.

The opening story, *U-TURN*, follows Professor Abdul Rasheed Bhat, who returns from Hamburg to his beloved Dal Lake, only to find it dying from pollution. His sadness reflects the larger decay of the valley. Yet, his decision to start a movement to restore the lake brings hope. The story links environmental damage with a decline in moral values, showing that renewal-whether of nature or spirit-demands both courage and initiative.

A JOURNEY BY BUS takes the reader on a trip from Jammu to Srinagar. The driver, Sardar Hukam Singh, navigates a bus full of characters-a talkative conductor, Mohd. Ameen, the young footballer, Shibani, and Sunita whose friendship begins on the road, and Swaroop Nath, a retired government officer observing all this. Their brief

exchanges-gentle arguments, laughter, and small moments of understanding-capture the pulse of ordinary life. The bus becomes a symbol of society itself-crowded, diverse, yet capable of humour and compassion.

In *BABU JI MIRACLE*, Sudhir's small act of kindness toward a stray dog uncovers an unexpected truth about his late father. Years earlier, his father had spread ghost stories to save the neighbourhood from a corrupt builder. What could have been a story about deception turns into one of cleverness and concern. The tale blends realism with gentle irony, though some parts move a little slowly.

That moral satisfaction often outweighs material success is the theme of *THE SHROUD-MAKER* – that tells the story of Qadir, who inherits his father's tailoring shop and expands it with the help of his wife, Mahzabeen. When Pandit Jankinath, a respected elder, asks him to stitch shrouds for the poor, Qadir agrees, though his wife worries about the loss of business. His income drops, but his reputation for kindness grows.

HEMELCOMING is about Kashinath, a Kashmiri Pandit who left the valley decades ago, and returns with his son to Srinagar. As he lights a candle by the Vitasta River, the gesture becomes a quiet act of remembrance and reconciliation. It is a poignant evocation of exile, memory, and fragile hope, enriched with symbolism.

The pain of inner turmoil, the distance within oneself is effectively narrated in *MANNEQUINS* that presents Vinod Pandita, who works in a Delhi showroom dressing lifeless models while his wife lies terminally ill. The mannequins-beautiful but soulless-mirror his own emptiness and sense of helplessness. Their silence reflects both his wife's suffering and his emotional numbness.

Both *HEMELCOMING* and *MANNEQUINS* remind readers

that exile is not only about geography. It can also be emotional—a loss of connection with one's own self and past.

In *THE UMBRELLA MAN*, Dina Nath, a widower and migrant, raises his daughter Santosh by teaching her to repair umbrellas. Through this simple trade, he teaches her the values of hard work and self-respect. The story shows how dignity can come from simple skills and steady effort.

HE & SHE narrates the meeting of two former lovers after many years. Their youthful passion has faded, but mutual respect remains. Raina avoids melodrama and sentimentality, showing that acceptance can take the place of longing, and that some bonds survive even after love ends.

Loss and mortality are central to *REVERIE* and *INTERLUDE*. In *REVERIE*, Prakash imagines conversations with his deceased wife Usha, and through these imagined dialogues, he moves from sorrow toward calm acceptance. Its gradual revelation of grief is deeply moving. In *INTERLUDE*, Shibaji, aware of his nearing death, finds peace in his wife's presence and his friend's company. Both stories suggest that while death ends life, it cannot erase love or memory.

The thrill of discovery and our deep connection with history is the focus of the *CAVE* story. An archaeologist exploring ancient caverns in Kashmir is forced by a storm to stop and reflect. What begins as a physical search turns into a meditation on time, history, and the human spirit. The story is a vivid blend of archaeology, reflection, and nature.

In *BOARDING CARD*, Rajesh, an airline supervisor, meets Lora, a model suffering from a terminal illness, at an airport café. Their brief conversation becomes a reflection on the shortness of life and the power of simple human contact. Stronger editing could sharpen its emotional core and better balance romance with the poignancy of looming loss.

The sense of place is central to all these stories. The Dal Lake, the Vitasta, the snow-covered peaks, and the narrow lanes of Srinagar are not just backgrounds—they are living presences that shape the people and echo their emotions.

The landscape stands as a silent witness to their joys and losses. Raina's writing is free from bitterness. His stories are gentle, humane, and full of quiet strength. Even in hardship, his characters continue to work, care, and hope. Humour, compassion, and moral courage shine through their struggles.

Taken together, the twelve stories suggest that exile is not only about losing a home, but about learning to live with longing. Small acts—a letter that arrives late, a neighbour's kindness, or a shared smile—become symbols of survival and continuity.

The translation successfully carries these moods into English, making them accessible to a wider audience. In his introduction, Prof. Bhan notes that the stories are set against the socio-cultural backdrop of the land and its people and their syncretic life. However, a few stories lean toward sentimentality and include more detail than needed. But the sincerity and clarity of expression make the book deeply moving.

Most of the stories move gently, without drama, suspense, or gripping plots. They simply follow life as it flows through the characters - in quiet moments, brief conversations, and small emotions. Nothing major happens, yet everything feels real. The calm flow and truth of everyday life gently hold the reader's attention.

However, some readers may find them situations not gripping enough and uneventful. With little action or conflict, they rely completely on emotion and small details to hold interest.

Published by Niyogi Books, this collection revives memories of a shared past and strengthens our sense of connection. Through these stories, Kashmir speaks again—not through anger or slogans, but through the calm and steady voice of its people who continue to remember, rebuild, and hope.

In the end, *U-TURN AND OTHER STORIES* is not about closure but about remembrance. It invites readers to listen to voices that history often overlooks. It reminds us that while politics and ideologies shift, what lasts are the human emotions of love, loss, and endurance. I strongly recommend this book - not for thrills, but for the calm truth it brings to the heart.



Rajinder Premi

Shadow over the valley

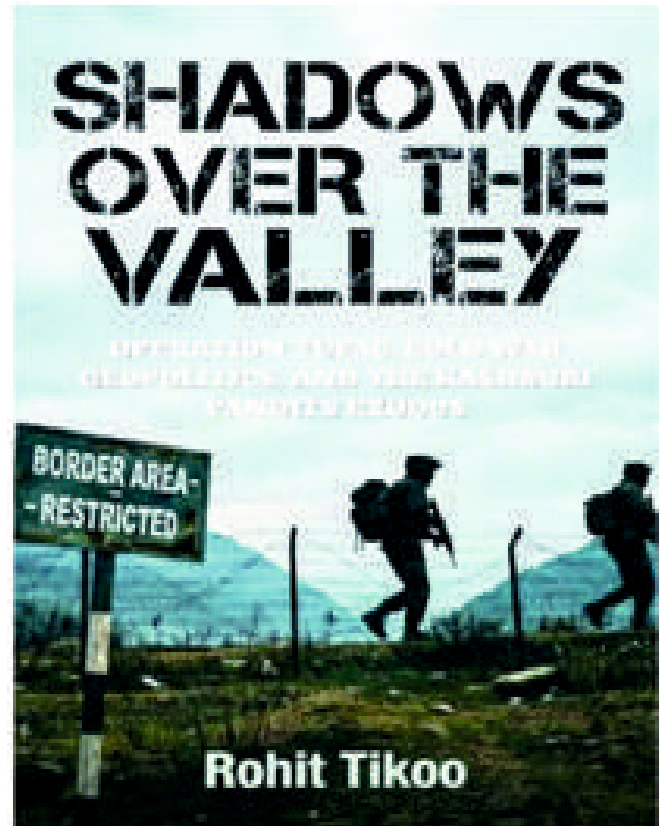
BOOK REVIEW by *Rajinder Premi*,

Public discussion about the Kashmiri Pandit exodus often begins and ends with January 1990. Fearful nights, sudden departures, and shattered lives dominate the narrative. While these moments deserve remembrance, they do not explain how an entire community reached that breaking point. *Shadows Over the Valley* by Rohit Tikoo sets out to answer that missing question.

This book does not describe an event in isolation. It examines a process. Tikoo argues that the exodus was not a spontaneous outcome of local unrest but the result of a long sequence of strategic, political, and institutional decisions taken over many years. That approach immediately separates this work from much of the existing literature.

The author begins outside Kashmir. He traces the Cold War context that reshaped South Asia, particularly the transformation of Afghanistan into a battlefield of proxy warfare. He explains how ideological mobilisation, intelligence operations, and militant infrastructure developed during this period did not disappear once global attention shifted. Instead, these mechanisms were redirected toward Kashmir. The argument is presented clearly, without jargon or exaggeration, making complex geopolitics accessible to general readers.

One of the book's strongest sections deals with the role of Pakistan's intelligence establishment. Tikoo does not rely on rhetoric. He outlines organisational structure, recruitment models, training pipelines, and infiltration methods with precision. This approach replaces abstraction with clarity. Terrorism appears not as chaos but as administration. Readers see how violence acquires continuity when supported by systems rather than impulses.



The book also examines failures closer to home. Tikoo documents how political authority inside Jammu and Kashmir weakened steadily through the late 1980s. Governance faltered. Law enforcement retreated. Intelligence warnings failed to translate into protection. When elected leadership collapsed, the state lost its capacity to shield civilians. What followed was not immediate collapse, but paralysis. That paralysis proved fatal for vulnerable communities.

The chapters dealing with January 1990 reflect discipline and restraint. Tikoo does not seek emotional shock. He records intimidation, uncertainty, and fear as lived realities rather than dramatic episodes. The emphasis remains on process. How threat turned public. How confidence collapsed. How ordinary

families concluded that safety no longer existed. For Kashmiri Pandits, identity itself became a risk. The decision to leave emerges not as panic but as forced calculation. Exile occupies a central place in the book. Tikoo describes displacement as a long condition rather than a temporary phase. He writes about loss of livelihood, broken education, erosion of social structure, and prolonged dependence. Camps in Jammu represent not refuge, but waiting. These sections avoid sentimentality and gain strength from understatement. Suffering appears credible because it is not inflated.

The book does not suggest that violence touched only one group. It recognizes that civilians across communities suffered when authority collapsed. At the same time, it explains why Kashmiri Pandits bore a distinct burden. Small in number, lacking political influence, and dispersed across neighborhoods, they could not demand protection or shape outcomes. When systems fail, minorities fall first. The book explains this pattern without hostility or accusation.

The author also addresses the years after the exodus. Targeted killings, massacres, and unresolved cases puncture any claim that time delivered justice. Tikoo records names and places not as symbols, but as unanswered questions. He shows how accountability remained absent and how return became increasingly

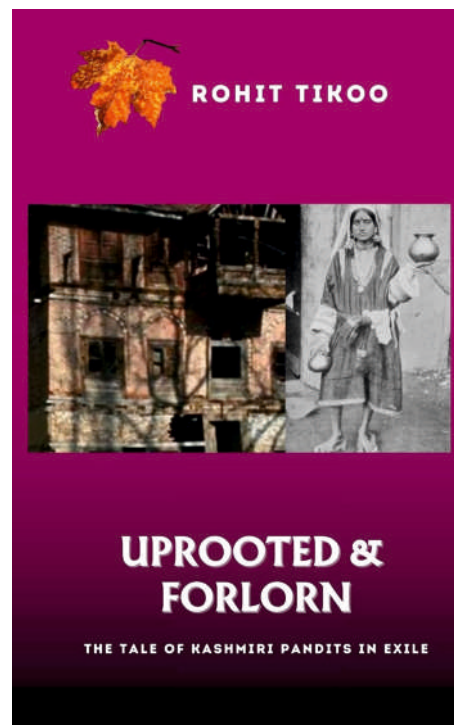
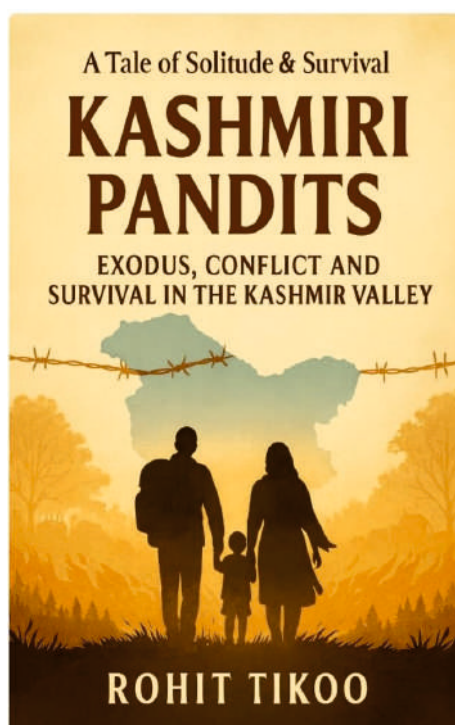
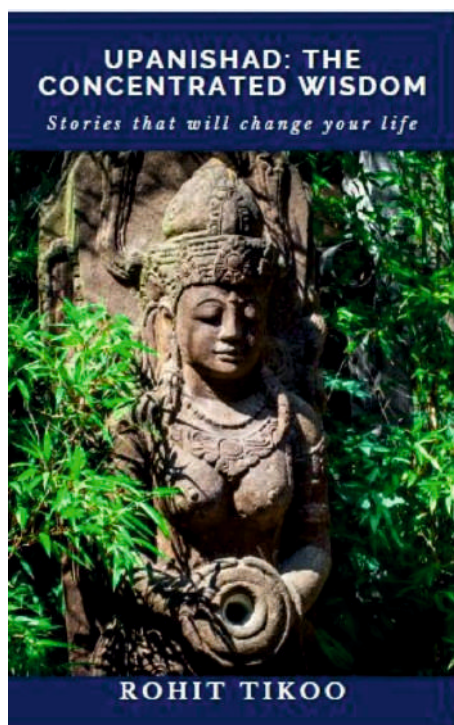
theoretical rather than practical.

Shadows Over the Valley avoids political slogan and communal framing. It does not offer simple villains or comforting conclusions. Instead, it insists on sequence, responsibility, and evidence. It argues that communities do not disappear overnight. They disappear when power retreats and silence replaces protection.

This book deserves attention because it expands understanding rather than narrowing it. It speaks to scholars, students, policymakers, and general readers alike. By connecting geopolitics to lived experience, it restores context to a tragedy too often reduced to fragments.

In documenting how displacement was prepared, executed, and prolonged, *Shadows Over the Valley* performs a necessary task. It ensures that memory is not left defenceless again.

At a time when public memory risks hardening into slogans, this book restores the discipline of inquiry. It asks readers to look beyond moments of shock and examine the quieter decisions that allowed those moments to occur. In doing so, *Shadows Over the Valley* strengthens historical understanding and preserves a record that future generations will need, not only to remember, but to learn.



A TRIBUTE IN MEMORY OF MAHARAJ KRISHEN KAW



Maharaj Krishen Kaw (1941–2019) was an eminent Indian bureaucrat, thinker, and author whose life's work left a profound and lasting impact on the Kashmiri Pandit community. Born in Srinagar to a family of Kashmiri Pandits, he displayed exceptional academic brilliance from an early age—completing his matriculation at the age of 10 and earning a master's degree in economics by 16 from Panjab University, followed by an LLB from Agra University. This extraordinary foundation shaped a mind that would later influence major national policies and community upliftment.

Although his administrative career spanned finance, civil aviation, defence, and human resource development, Kaw's most heartfelt contributions were directed toward safeguarding the rights, education, and rehabilitation of displaced Kashmiri Pandits after the exodus of 1990. As Secretary in the Ministry of Human Resource Development, he played a pivotal role in establishing supernumerary seats for displaced KP students across Kendriya Vidyalayas, technical institutions, and higher education institutions nationwide—opening academic doors for thousands whose education had been disrupted and this continues till now.

As Member Secretary of the Fifth Pay Commission and later a respected elder statesman, he continued to champion community causes. His leadership as President of the All India Kashmiri Samaj (2003–2009) shaped the Prime Minister's Employment Package of 2008, enabling the creation of Jagti Township, securing employment for KP youth in the Valley, and ensuring upward revision of monthly relief for displaced families.

Kaw also supported several vital initiatives, including regularisation of contractual KP teachers in Delhi, a PIL in the Supreme Court, and the establishment of the Lal Ded Centre at Pamposh Enclave. His cultural involvement—such as supporting the publication of *Vaakh*—helped preserve Kashmiri Pandit literary heritage.

Through vision, integrity, and deep cultural commitment, M. K. Kaw stands as one of the most influential advocates for the Kashmiri Pandit community, leaving a legacy of empowerment, dignity, and enduring hope.

हक चीची ग्युंद गुहि



Ramesh Nirash

हक चीची ग्युंद गुहि चेदि शानन, छल खोरबानन पेय वल लार
सजलंगु खुर आव सतवैन खानन, गंडुरोस तानन डोल अंहार

टैव फेचव फंब खोर शांदुक, होजुक शदुक पयुर मा द्राव
तमहव तेबरे तुरपव करिनम, खोरपदि चारेन छति गव नार

छेपु छार रोजम संन्यवार बरनय, अँन कतरव तुलहम गत ग्यूर
थुनयक बुनलय टंनरोव सोरुय, रज वटवय रूज वजनय तार

खोह दिय २ गव पोह मंज सौतस, मोतस हरटन दोह पेय याद
लँठकज व्यठसय ठल त्युथ गुंदनम, गिल गव जाल्व बोतुलहार

हिरक्युय खिरटँक लायय तवनम, वॉन वॉन फर डुल पायन गोस
पोण मा ज़ाह त्रोव मीनुथ बानस, दानस चारेन दुह गटकार

छटनय वटनय बर वया बोहरेन, चेपु छम वँहथ गंडनय लँय
माजन हर रोस अलबानु लाजन, बेरि बेरि नवनोव जेरि संमसार

जत तँ तँ के गुँ गुँ ठोल ठोल, छल मा रल गछु नल्यु वॉटसय
फनक्युय मॉहिर थँप दिथ कननय, वनि कुस थनक्युय ब्रजवन शारा॥

व्य त ब त लुत बाब हु कुस ब कुस, "निराश" हंगमंग वनतम व कुस
बबरे पन वोल वन मन्न ब्रारे, कीतरन जेवि लोग तोत गुपतार ।

छुम तु करस क्या

- बी.एल. कौल 'दीप'



तिन तिन तारा
वथ हावतम म्ये यारा
आई डोट नो ह् वाट टू डू
बिल यू कम टू माय स्यस्व्यू
में बड़ी मुश्किल में हूं
कोई बता दे में क्या करूं
छुम तु करस क्या

बंगलोर मंगलोर सिल्कून छम
जारजट मरूमल शफान छम
यारि कॉम करिथ, तिलु छॉविथ छम
छम तु करस क्या

कूमती-कूमती आसम अनिमट्रैय
ट्रौन-ट्रौन ट्यौहारण करिमचैय
छम पतु ट्रंकन मंज बरिमट्रैय
छम तु करस क्या

सौंदकस मंज छिम स्यूठ हथ-शथ
अनान बु नॅव्य प्रॉन्य रोज्ञान पथ
प्रॉन्य लागनस नु यिवान अथ-वथ
छम तु करस क्या

सौंरी ब्लौज तंग तंग छिम
सौंवान छस जोयिन करु जिम
रोजु तति फिट तय बेयि रिक्तम
करस तु करु क्या

रंग-बिरंगी डिज़ाईनदार
बंगर्यन खोतमुत छुम अम्बार
नवि लागान प्राणि गयि बेकार
छम तु करस क्या

यनष् टी-शर्ट तय जीन असि लोब
फ्राक-शिल्वारन ह्योतनय लोब
चुन्य पानस प्यठ बासान गोब
करस तु करु क्या

हसबंडस छुम फाईनानशल ब्रख
फजूल खर्चस प्यठ तुलान क्रख
दपान ज्ञनानन द्रामुच छि ख्रख
छम तु करस क्या

म्येति गॉमच छि चॉनी बॉश्य
सुवनावान बु सच करान ऑश्य
पलव देर वुछितुय छुम यिवान तॉश्य
करस तु करु क्या

अल्मारि मंज प्यथ पांच शेय स्यूठ
अख छुम छोट तय ब्याख गछान ज्यूठ
वातान न अँडय छुस गोमुत ब्योठ-पूठ
करस तु करु क्या

युस चीज कम अँस्य वरतावान
तथ्य प्यठ ज़्याद क्याजि खर्चावान
नाहक हुर्यर अँस्य रावरावान
छुम तु करस क्या

कशीरि नाय ओस जायि हुंद अभाव
येति रूद फ्लैटन हुंद चिकुचाव
प्यठ पलव-दलवन हुंदय तनाव
करस तु करु क्या

मो थाव खबर वोन्य कनो कनस
वर्धन यिम धूय कुनि आश्रमस
अदु शांती मेली व्ये मनस
छुम तु करस क्या

'दीप' वनान वुनि पायस प्ये
थाव लबि ताकस अपुजुय तेह
सोम रोज, सोम ख्ये, सोम्य चू बेह
छुम तु करस क्या

तिन-तिन-तिन तारा
वथ हावतम म्ये यारा
छुम तु करस क्या
छुम तु करस क्या ॥

नवरात्र- स्तवन

Jaya Sibua Raina

नवरात्र-निशा में अन्तःदीप प्रज्वलित होते,
महालक्ष्मी की चैतन्य प्रभा अवतरित होती;
वैदिक श्रीसूक्त-स्वर में नामावलि समुच्चरित,
शतोत्तर-अष्ट महिमा लयबद्ध प्रकाशित होती।

धर्म-संवलित अर्थ का दिव्य विधान यही,
संचय नहीं, लोकहित में प्रवाहित चेतना;
मन्त्र-संयोजन में ऋषि-वाक् छन्दमय बनी,
अन्तर्ध्वनि में जाग्रत होती परम साधना।

मृण्मय दीप से यन्त्र-महिमा तक यात्रा,
श्रीचक्र कश्मीर-भूमि का चक्रेश्वर स्वरूप;
शुष्क गिरि में अंकुर, स्थिर सरिता को धारा—
नियमन-शक्ति का यह दिव्य आलोक रूप।

"अ" से "ह" पर्यन्त संकल्प-वर्ण-विभा,
नवरात्र-वसना में प्रकटे श्री की प्रभा।



कुसुम वारिकू

अमार

मेदि कजाबु छांडान आवा बेयि यि मोत
तलसु नावस दीतोस नज़रा गोमुत मा छुस दुत्योत
वथ मा सना छस रॉवमुच अमा यि योरकुन कोत
बाखतु मा छु गोमुत ,हे बाया हे ह्य सु पोता।।

हे क्या सु रोवतु मे छुव ना परजुनावान
बु ओसुस ना यती ज़ामुत यती ह्य ओसुस बसान

हजूम अख अकिस प्रछान ,यि क्याज़ि यूत ओश हारान
यि करुव कथ छु करान , थेपि थेपि कस छु गारान
यि कस सना खॉतर दरबुदर यि कससुन्द डेरु छांगान
यि क्याज़ि गव त्रेन त् नुवाहन, अस कसुन्द फेरान ।।

बु ओसुस यती रोज़ान यती हय ओस रोज़ान ।।
तान्य गयि

अँख क्रखा गोशन ,कुस तान्य ओस ब्रज़ान
हय द्य अमिस ददुवनु बहय छु सन यि परजानान
यि क्या सु छु मास्टर जी, सु खोलकी तु ज़बर इनसान
हता हयो यि हय ओस यती ,बिलकुल ओस यि यती रोज़ान

वे ओरजुव बु ओसुस वन्य लोसान
बु ओसुस ना यती रोज़ान
ओसुस हय यती रोज़ान

पता छुम बराबर , दपुखय यि तुर डीशित छुस खोदान
गलि ज़यव ज़न छम गमुच, दिलुक हुबाब छुम नु कांह बोज़ान
म्यानि मनदोरि ओस ठस दरवाज़ आसान
यम्युक सदा महलुक महलु ओस बोज़ान
सो मनदोर्य ह्य यति म्यन्य छुर्य बॉत्त्व ऑस्य रोज़ान ।।

यिनय छु न सु घर युस हरविज़ि ओस शोलान
यति हर विहिस वरि हारि तु कोतर ऑस्य बोलान
ऑठ वांगन कुत्य तु बेशुमार अलु आसु डोलान
शेंकराचार ओस गरु अचान यति कॉनी दॉर ऑस्य खोलान ।।

ब किथु लगुस योर ,आस मा गिनदान गिनदान
न न व छुख ठठ करान, बु कति ओसुस यति रोज़ान
बु ओसुस नु ज़ाह , ज़हॉन्य ति यति रोज़ान

तलबा प्रॉर्य तव अख रुमा ,यि म्यचि तिलिम हा तुलुहा
ज़ानि दय ,कॉसि छा पय
यिम कॉशिर यति ऑस्य रोज़ान ,तिमन कोत छि वन्य सोज़ान

Icicle

Poem of Bal Krishan Sanyasi translated in English

Would it not snow so heavily,
for the roofs to take loads high.
And roofs would not perspire to drench wet,
for sweat drops to take this shape
of smooth, sober, pretty charm.

Hanging high in desperation,
yet groom and grow in suspension -
rear a desire, someone to find:
hold my hand - care and mind,
and take me around for a spree
in brides decor for the glee.

I am an icicle at the roof edge
in cold condition and anxious notion.
Though in cold state yet breathe warmth
and keep alive my hope and spirit.
Ah! a host of folks in disguise,
keep ill eye to grapple and grab,
grip and crush under the prick of teeth.
Ah! the sun under the cloud cover too,
does viciously gaze on my nude body
and its rays spoil me to get done.

Now I keep some moments of life to boon
and will be done away from the roof soon
keep no hope to take to life again
keep no hope to groom and grow again.



ग़ज़ल

डॉ सुभाष प्रेमी 'सुमन'

1st

बुलबुलों की देह पर देखो छपा है साफ़ रे!
बाज़ के इतिहास को मैंने पढा है साफ़ रे!

दोस्ती के शब्द को उसने कहा है साफ़ रे,
दुश्मनी के अर्थ को मैंने सुना है साफ़ रे!

क्या हिनैषी मान कर उस को सुनाएं हाल हम,
अब युधिष्ठिर ही दुःशासन का सगा है साफ़ रे!

आप लंबी उम्र की आशीष अब मत दीजिए,
आजकल, श्रीमान्, यह तो बढ-दुआ है साफ़ रे!

क़त्ल के अभियोग में है, न्याय उस के हाथ में,
खून जिस के हाथ पर अब तक लगा है साफ़ रे!

खूब मंडराए, मगर जल ही नहीं बरसा गए,
बादलों ने खेत को फिर से छला है साफ़ रे!

तुम ग़ज़ल समझो इसे, या और कोई नाम दो,
हाल मेरा है, जिसे, मैंने लिखा है साफ़ रे!

2nd

बेशक बादल के पर्दे में लगता धुंधला - धुंधला सूरज,
पल दो पल में फिर चमकेगा आशाओं का उजला सूरज।

अंधियारे की शातिर चालें मात उसे कब दे पाती हैं,
अंधियारे की खातिर आखिर नहले पर है दहला सूरज।

निद्रा से अलसाई धरती को झकझोर गया चुपके से,
तड़के-तड़के तिनका - तिनका उजियाले से नहला सूरज।

डाल से इसको तोड़ रहे हो क्योंकर हे निष्ठुर वनमाली,
आज कली ने खिलकर देखा है जीवन का पहला सूरज।

उसकी ख्याति जलाए तुमको, यह तो कोई बात नहीं है,
उसके जैसा उज्वल हो जा, तू भी इक दिन कहला सूरज।

चलते चलते चूर हुआ है, सांझ ढले सोया फिर जम कर,
भोर हुई तो बजारें सा चलने को फिर मचला सूरज।

इससे बढ़कर जीवन को जीने की परिभाषा क्या होगी,
डूब रहा हो तो भी लगता सुंदर, सौम्य, सुनहला सूरज।

छाय

बुध खटिथ
गाशि लँयव निश
जखान-पकान, दोह राथ कोताह
ज़ागान रोज़ान शाह रगन
आँगन दोसव प्येठि, वओँटु लायान पकान
निवान थपि ताख़्खेव प्येठअ
आश रुछिमचअ वँसव प्येठअ
अमाह; थकान ति छनाह, यि छाय?
मेअ वुछ
दोहदिश ज़न तु पकान, मेअ पतअ-पतअ
यि कति प्रथॉन?
यि कति जुवान?

यि क्याह युथ नँ द्रअँठि गछॉन-नँअिन पअिठ?
खलुकन तरफ़न शुरयेंन क्योहो बड़येंन
लमान, लिथुवान तु निवाँन अकि-अकि
अंमाह यि थपल-मोकल
दिवाँनकस संनाह?
ख्येशव-ख्येशव निथ
अंमारडन संमुसोतुर करु नावान
यि कस सअँन्ज़ राय?
यि छि किछ छाय?
गडयिबॉनय ज़ागॉन पकान...
यौगव प्येठअ

कुमार अशोक सराफ 'घायल'

अय माजि ज्वेवे

अय माजि ज्वेवे छव गॉलुवॉनय
कँडशिरी कोंमुक पडोज़ ज़डँपॉनय
रयेषि कशपन योँछ अट्ट दृ-तोवुथ
कँशुर प्रज़लोवथन संसारय ।।

असुनाह गिन्दुना त्वेय हेछिनोवुथ
सादव संतव दअिस व्हेछिनोवुथ
त्वेय त्रेक-रयेँन रूछिरिथ पत्र मॉनय
अय माजि ज्वेवे

घॉनमाथ त्वेअ शीतिकअँन्ठ कल्हण ही
मंमठ, अभिनवगुप्त, बिल्हण ही
गछ करिथ त्वेअ तोलुडिक् अंममारय
अय माजि ज्वेवे

त्वेय राज़ तु रअँनी संमरिथ गँडयि
त्वेय वख़तडकि त्रुकि छौख ज़ख-दिथ गँडयि
कोताह पथ कालुकऑन पावय
अय माजि ज्वेवे

त्वेय शूभ दिवुथ तल्लि नुन्दुरयेषि सड
त्वेय रओँफ दयेदि बखचुथ घओँन ग्यॉनय
त्वेय नअँदिम मँहजूर ललुवॉनय
अय माजि ज्वेवे

चड रूतूरूक रूजँख पत्र नावान
हयेडथ रयेषिमाल्युन चड रँन्ज़ुनावॉन
त्वेय कअिल जडरि रछिथख पज़ि ग्यॉनय
अय माजि ज्वेवे

त्वेय ज़डचन रीचन गंड रँछरूथ
त्वेय कठिशस तापस ताब दयुतुथ
चड कुलि संसारडिच जानॉनय
अय माजि ज्वेवे

त्वेय वख़तुक वरजुन प्येतुरेवुथ
रंगु रादन फुत-फुत मंनुसोवुथ
छख यारबलव क्याह छारॉनय
अय माजि ज्वेवे

त्वेय लौलुमतु लाय कौरूथ कोंमस
त्वेय बडि हटि वंनुवुथ इँन्सॉनस
श्रोचर त्वेय चडविथ दौदम-दॉमय
अय माजि ज्वेवे

त्वेय शीनअ थौरयेँन तुलुकतरयेँन हयेडथ
क्याह नु ज़ोरूथ असि हअविथ वथ
इल वौलुर छु कोताह जीलॉनय
अय माजि ज्वेवे

अय कडँशिरी ज्वेवे असि रअिछ च क
कुल ज़गतस बावुव वॉन बजर
'घडयिल' शअयिर यी नालॉनय
अय माजि ज्वेवे

कुमार अशोक सराफ 'घायल'

Kashmiri Poem

यि वीनमरा अस्य यिथय वरतौव्य वखतन
तु पानिक्य पौठ्य ज़न खरचौव्य वखतन

ज़मोनरा रानि हिराकिरा यूत वुसात
द्वछव वुछ ब्योल ज़न छँकरौव्य वखतन

तु बाकुय रूद क्याह यथ सामरँच वन्य
अँरोय च़लु लारि मंज़ थँकरौव्य वखतन

शुमाररा ओँस्य, असि ओ रा ज़्यूठ इतिहारा
वुछिव अज़ ओँगजि प्यठ गंज़रौव्य वखतन

रु नय वुनिराविहे, वनि रावहेव मा
येतेन ओनिखलि तुलिन हुति त्रौव्य वखतन

छि वुनि केँह खूवसूरत बुथ्य ओछन तल
ज़ि यिम ज़न केँठि बुथि मँशरौव्य वखतन

Sunita Raina Pandit

The Time

I narrated all,

our deal for zero by the time.

Oh, the cruel, you spent us like water.

Listen! the share of our land has vastness.

And you scattered us like fistful seeds.

What is left now to ponder over?

Broken are we, in the run, by the time.

Valuable we were, having an old history.

Lo, today, we are counted on the fingers.

Had you not thinned us,

we would have not lost in the din.

You blindly took us here ,

blindly threw us there.

A few beautiful faces are still in the eyes.

Alas! They are forgotten because of your

deceptive faces,

O the time,

the cruel time.

Translated By Adarsh Ajit



आदि--दर्पण

जननी माता- दर्पण के सम्मुख
स्वयं आदिदर्पण है।
न वह क्षणजीवी काँच
जो स्पर्श से चूर हो जाए,
वरन् वह अनादि-चिदाकाश
जहाँ सत्ता ने प्रथम बार
स्वयं को निहारा
और अनाहत नाद में स्पन्दित हुआ —
"अहम्!"
नामाभिधान से पूर्व,
वर्णमाला के उद्भव से पहले,
विचार-रेखाओं की रचना से भी पहले,
उसकी दृष्टि
मौन-उपनिषद् बनकर
शिशु-चेतना में अवतरित होती है।
उस नेत्र-संवाद में
आकृति मात्र नहीं प्रकटती —
वहाँ अनन्त का सूक्ष्म कम्पन है,
निर्विकल्प स्वीकृति का आलोक है।
हे जननी,
तुम प्रतिबिम्ब नहीं —
तुम प्रकाश-प्रत्यभिज्ञा हो।
जब जगत्
स्वरूप को खण्ड-खण्ड कर देता है,
जब काल
अस्मिता को संशय-दर्पणों में विखण्डित करता है,
तब तुम्हारी निःस्पन्द करुणा
उन बिखरे प्रतिबिम्बों को
पुनः पूर्णत्व में संहत कर देती है।
तुम्हारी गोद
शरण मात्र नहीं —
वह प्रकृति का अपने परब्रह्म-स्रोत की स्मृति है।
तुम्हारा मौन

शून्यता नहीं —
मन्त्रगर्भा चेतना का आदिगर्भ है।
तुम्हारे सान्निध्य में
अहं का हिमांशु
हिमालय-प्रभात में गल जाता है,
और शेष रह जाता है —
निर्मल, निर्विकल्प,
स्वप्रकाशित आकाशा
तुम मुख नहीं दिखाती —
तुम अन्तःस्थित अग्नि का साक्षात्कार कराती हो।
छाया नहीं —
स्वात्मदीप्ति का उद्देवना
जब प्रौढ संतति
लौह-नगरों और तर्क-प्रासादों में
परदर्शनों के वस्त्र धारण कर भटकती है,
तब भी तुम्हारा अदृश्य आदिदर्पण
उसके अन्तराल में
अखण्ड-ज्योति का अनुवर्तन करता रहता है।
माता —
प्रथम गुरु,
प्रथम श्रुति,
प्रथम देवालय।
तुममें सीमित सत्ता
असीम का अवगाहन करती है
और कम्पन शान्त हो जाता है।
वयोंकि तुम्हारा दर्पण
न दोषान्वेषी है,
न विकृति-दर्शी;
वह केवल उद्घाटित करता है —
उस निहित दीप्ति को
जिसे हम
अपना कहने का साहस
विस्मृत कर चुके थे।

कोटि-कोटि प्रणाम ।

आपकी ध्यान-संवेदना और दार्शनिक लय के अनुरूप, उसी भाव-स्रोत को और अधिक संस्कृतनिष्ठ, आगमिक-आत्मदर्शी
मुक्तछन्द में प्रस्तुत कर रहा हूँ

Chaman Lal Raina

मशराव किथपुठ्य कशीर ।



by Anil Koul 'Komal'

बु त्रावहा सुउय माय
मगर गलन छम पनन्यन हुंज छाय
स्वपनस मंज छिम करन पुरख सुरी प्राय
मशराव किथपुठ्य कशीर ॥

ब्र छुस न कुंसि खोचन
मगर बु छुस न कशीरि ति रोजन
पांत-वुह वरी पथ, वुलिजि मंज वुनि सौ जाय
मशराव किथपुठ्य कशीर ।

म्यानि वजूटक अख निशान
म्युन्य यि कुशिर ज़बान
वाटु-पुरिम करिथ ति वनन छुस कुशिर लफ़ज़ ढाय
मशराव किथपुठ्य कशीर ।

पनन्यकिन तुझिम सारेय रोच
बोज़म बरादरी हुंज कथ तीच
रीच तुलिय ति बेय रीच ज़ाय
मशराव किथपुठ्य कशीर ।

बु तब्दील गौस व बन्योवुस नौव
म्य रुतबु म्यूल म्य त्रोव हतव-होव
कथि-कथि प्यठ शूर्यन छुस वनन, लगहोव भलाय
मशराव किथपुठ्य कशीर ।

म्य कनन दयुत थोप बु बन्योवुस ज़ोर
यि क्याह म्य कोर, व ओसुस ओर-दौर
कुशिर बुथ बूज़िथ दपन छुस बु बोज़य नाय
मशराव किथपुठ्य कशीर ।

यूता बु वलन छुस दूर व्यूता नज़दीक
म्युन्य कुशूर रोज़नकय आसार छिन ठीक
घरस मंज सौरुय कुशुर म्य सिवाय
मशराव किथपुठ्य कशीर ।

(In Exile, Mother Missed Her Shadipora Prayag)

Mother used to say:

"When I am gone,
Take what remains of me to Shadipora Sangam,
Where the Sindhu stream joins the Vitasta River,
Where our dead have been sleeping since eternity.
That is where your father waits."

She said,
"After this long exile,
Only there can I speak to them.
Only there can I listen.
Let me stay hidden beneath the current,
Unseen,
Unnoticed."

After exile,
She spoke often of the cold waters
of the Sindhu stream,
White with snowmelt,
Running through the Ganderbal valley,
The mere mention of which brought a visible joy
To her otherwise pensive face.

She remembered that water,
Once flowing through the taps of Rainawari.
For her, this Sindhu stream water was Amrita,
Not because it promised immortality,
But because she had drunk it
As a baby,
As a young girl,
As a married woman,
As a housewife.
It lived in her blood.
It was her first belonging.

She died far from that remembering,
At sixty-six,
Her body thinning quickly after the 1990s,
In the heat and dust of exile,
Through the daily humiliations of water
scarcity in Jammu,
Through the long feeling of being rendered
irrelevant.
She lost her voice,
Then her authority,
Then even the weight of her own name.

We could not take her to Shadipora Sangam.
The confluence had learned the language
of terror.

The waters had learned blood.
It had become a playground for those who
perfected cruelty upon innocents.
So we carried her elsewhere.

Her ashes touched the Chanderbhaga at
Akhnoor,
The Askini River of the Vedas,
A living archive of India's spiritual
and historical journey,
Ice-cold,
Authentic,
Sparkling,
Yet, alien to her.

The river received her
Without question.
She must have wept
Inside that water.
She must have called us traitors.

But I know this:
My father rose from his waiting at
Shadipora Prayag.
The ancestors, too, gathered their silences
And went to Trimmu Sangam in Jhang
To meet the new arrival,
Their own Bentathi,
Kaki to some,
Bhabi to others.

Trimmu, the sangam where the Vitasta River
Meets the Chanderbhaga River,
Where rivers forget partitions,
Where ashes do not know borders,
Where ashes cannot read maps of hatred.
Where, every banishment is undone.

Avtar Mota

Sarwanand Koul Premi

Anantnag, Jammu & Kashmir

Sarwanand Koul Premi, son of Gopi Nath Koul (the first matriculate in his village) and Omravati Koul, was born in a farming family of Anantnag district in the year 1924. He was a well known freedom fighter in addition to being a renowned philanthropist, Gandhian, broadcaster, social reformer, litterateur and translator with the knowledge of Hindi, Urdu, Kashmiri, Persian, English, and Sanskrit. He worked towards the cause of the marriage of orphan Muslim girls. Being an eminent scholar, he firmly believed in the national integrity amongst all communities. During the Quit India Movement from 1942–1946, he also worked underground for the cause of nation and got arrested on six occasions during this time-period. His work was recognized by Mahatma Gandhi, who presented him (1946) in a photoframe one of his famous Hindi poems “Aav chalen ek saath chalen”. He was honoured with the epit et of ‘Premi’ by Ghulam Ahmed Mehjoor for his love of poetry. He worked for the State Education Department from 1956–1979. He and his son, Virender, were brutally murdered by the militants in the year 1990.

Sarwanand Koul Premi was respected by all communities. His publications include more than three dozen books, along with the translations of Bhagwad Gita, Gitanjali and Ramayana in Kashmiri. With the youth of Kashmir to know about the rich cultural heritage of our country, it is important for them to read his works. He was a staunch secularist and worked hard towards national integration and understanding. He was posthumously felicitated by Delhi Pradesh BJP with a medal and memento (1997) on the occasion of 50 years’ celebrations of our independence. He has also been awarded a gold medal by the J&K Government (1997), Shree Bhatt Puruskar by J&K Vichar Manch, New Delhi (2000), Sharda Puruskar Samman by Sanjeevani Sharda Kendra, Jammu (2006) and the First Alakh Saman by Shri Alakh Sahiba Trust, Jammu (2017).

Of late, DDA has named a community centre in Sarita-Vihar (pocket-A), after this great freedom fighter as Sarwanand Koul Premi Memorial Community Centre, after approval from the Government of NCT, Delhi, in 2009. He has also been posthumously honoured with the award for his literary achievements by the Athrot Foundation in the year 2019. Additionally, the Lt. Governor of UT Govt. of J&K has posthumously honoured Shri Sarwanand Koul Premi with a lifetime achievement award consisting of a cash award of Rs. One lakh, a medal, and a citation on the eve of Republic Day 2022. The Government Hr. Secondary School Soafshali, Kokernag, has been named after this eminent personality as the Sarwanand Koul Premi Higher Secondary school, Soafshali, vide in the same year. A name plate has also been inscribed alongwith few other famous freedom fighters of the J&K on the Tribute wall for freedom fighters in Vivekananda Kendra, Kaniya Kumari, with efforts done by Chakra Vision India Foundation Trust. Furthermore, a Special Postal Cover has been issued by the Department of Posts, Ministry of Communications, GoI, by the Chief Postmaster General, J&K Circle, Srinagar at Jammu on 23 Oct. 2022, Meghdoot Bhawan, Jammu.

D.N. NADIM

LETTER TO FRIEND WHO SVERVED AND TOOK THE OTHER PATH

(A letter to Sarwanand Koul Premi)

Who made you raise your passion to Empyrean? Whose frenzy reached its apogee? One who gave me flight to the Moon, that idea well deserves welcome flowers. You consider love mere fun you love whosoever you liked to love. How could one make ruined hearts inhabitable? Better you take care of your own heart. Remove all hurdles from the its, the bubul is seeking soaring to tree tops. If you keep it confined to the tree trunks, it might get ensnared for no fault. A black wine of dark night you found, without assessing its quality, See how the Sun shines from the East, think, the goblet of night has cracked. Fresh dew and a waft of breeze, someone’s tears and someone’s sighs, Those who dispel darkness of night get morning pearls to garnish their collars. Blood is congealed deep in the bosom , the red petals are only for show, Think of the travails the red poppy underwent in nightly painful journey. Many are still longing for autumn many are inebriated by the nightly drink, Nadim is still in high hopes, singing to the advent of blissful spring.

Postscript: I got the book. I wish you long life and prosperity. Keep working in your own way. The time is sure to come when the cup of the night shall crack, and the Sun of Truth shall brightly shine.

*Your companion,
Nadim*

Kashmiri Talent in Floria



Dr. Chaman Lal Raina

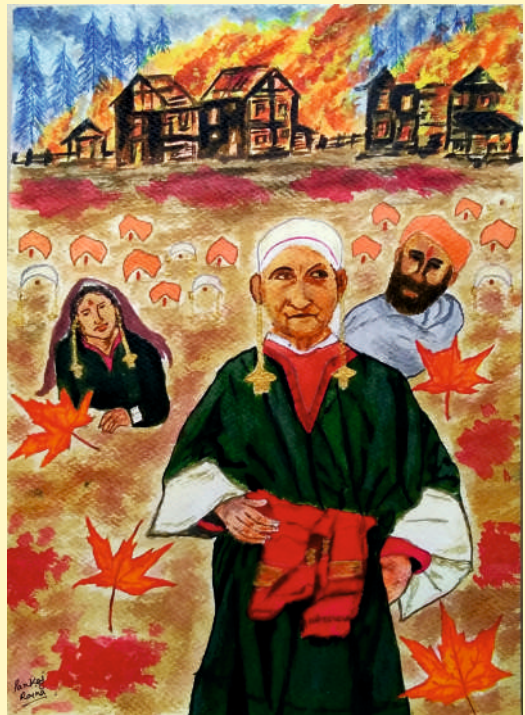


Pankaj Raina



Chinar Leaf Artwork

Acrylic Artwork/ On Real Peepal Leaf



Exodus of Kashmiri Pandits

Acrylic on Paper/ size: A3



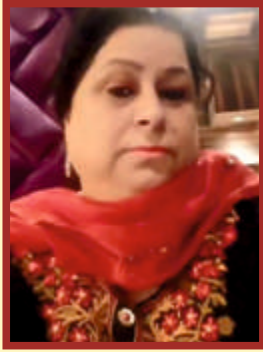
Kashmiri Panchang (Janthri cover)

Acrylic on canvas/ size: 1ft x1ft



Dal Lake Kashmir

acrylic artwork/ on Real Peepal leaf



Sushma S Sahni



Sunita Handoo

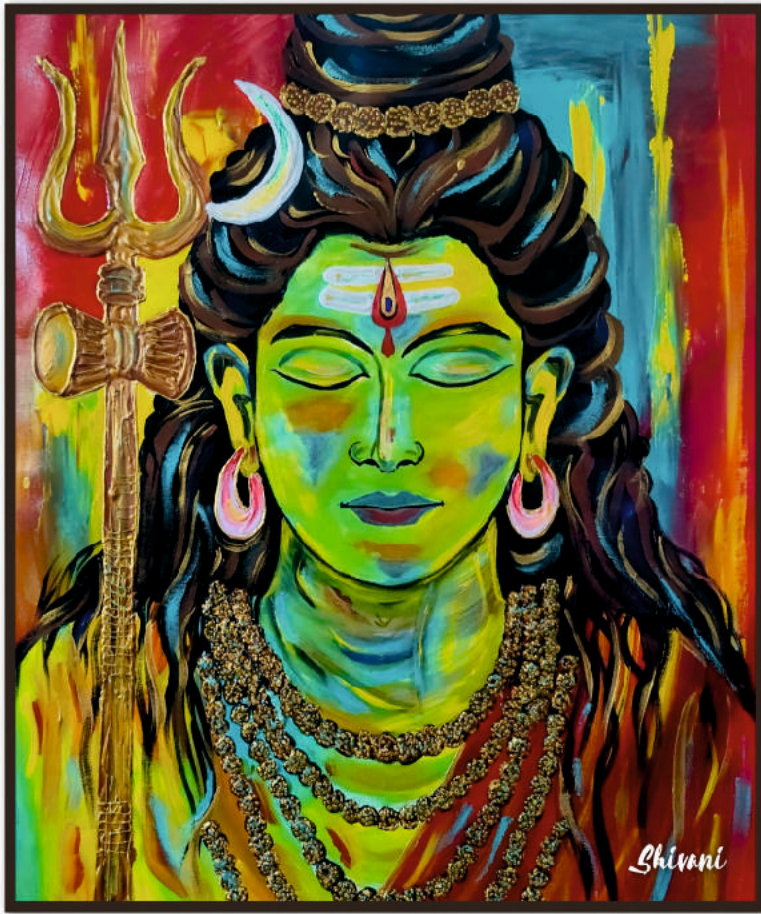




J.K Mirza



*Shivjee creating Satisar Jeel for the recreation of Mata Parvati.
The painting has Yemberzal Flowers.
Weeping Willows Lotus Flowers and also a portion of Maer.
(Green Algae floating on lake water)*



Shivani Koul bhat

Theme: The Neon Ascetic

Sub-theme: Vibrant Stillness in a Chaotic Universe

Tagline

"Beyond the Spectrum: Where Infinite Silence Meets Eternal Energy."

Explanation

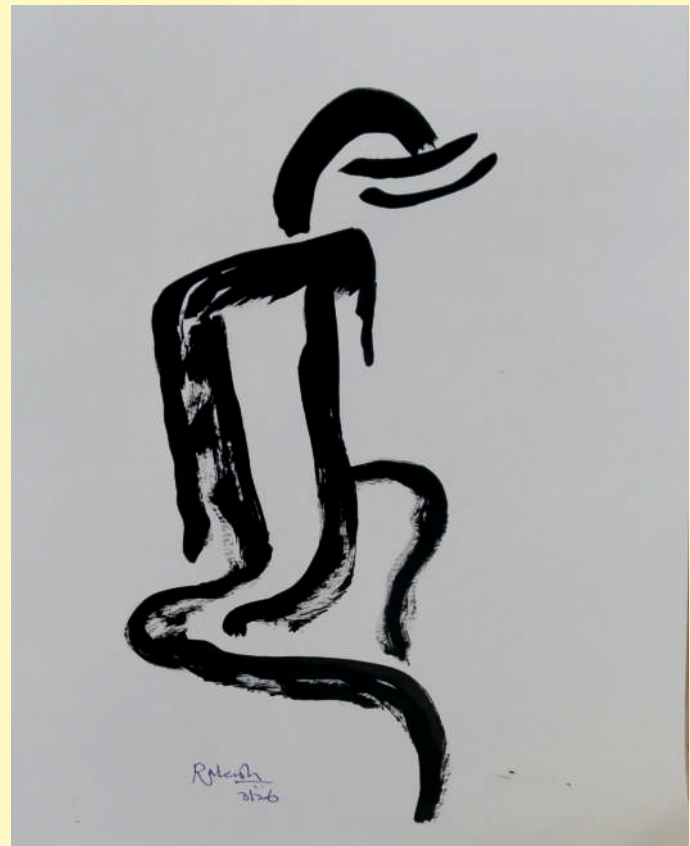
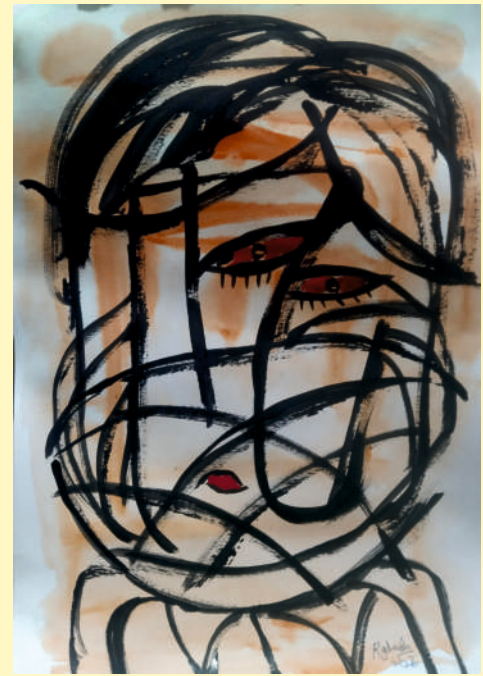
Color Symbolism: The use of vibrant greens and yellows on Shiva's face represents Prana (life force) and the concept of Prakriti (nature). It suggests that the deity is not a distant figure, but a living, breathing pulse within the natural world.

While the background features chaotic, fiery red and cool blue brushstrokes—symbolizing the volatile duality of the universe—Shiva's eyes remain closed. This highlights the theme of inner equilibrium; the ability to remain centered while the world (the "Tandava" of life) swirls around you.

The Trishul (trident), the Damru (drum), the crescent moon, and the third eye—but they are rendered with a metallic, golden texture. This gives the painting a modern, "Neo-spiritual" feel, bridging the gap between ancient mythology and contemporary abstract art.



Rakesh Kumar Kaul



OUR PROGENY

Budding Poet

Dear Future, I'm Not Done Yet



Aarna Arun Koul

Dear future, I'm not done yet. You rush toward me like the waves that rush to meet the shore.
You keep demanding more.

More time. More effort. More energy.

But why?

Why must I conform to this strict system that crunches out uniform results?

Why can't I be as free as the hummingbird, which can traverse the vast oceans, continents, and barriers that restrict others?

Why, dear future, why?

My mother often tells me that the future waits for no one. That the clock keeps ticking even when I pause to breathe.

"Keep moving," she says to me. "The world does not wait for those who pause too long in wonder."
And perhaps she is right.

But still I wonder -- is life only a race against time? A checklist of achievements that define who I am rather than my own character? A ladder I must climb before the sun sets?

Or is it something quieter? Like the river that bends and wanders, Takes its time-- But eventually meets the sea?

Dear future, Let me be that river. Let me carve my own path through stones and soil. Let me pause in the beautiful valleys with orange sunsets, reflect the sky for a while, Gather strength from waters no one else can see.

Dear future, I promise I am coming. But let me arrive as who I truly am, not as the version the world hurried me to become.

Because I'm still learning, still growing, still gathering the courage to become the person I am meant to be.

Dear future, oh dear future, Wait for me, I'm not done yet.

अपनी ही धरती पर बेघर - मैं पंडित हूँ



Saarthak Kachroo
'X'

आओ सुनाएँ तुम्हें कहानी सन १९९० की,
19 जनवरी की वो सर्द रात सन १९९० की...
जब घाटी में हवा चली फकत मज़हब की बुनियाद पर,
इंसानों ने बेच खाई इंसानियत एक आवाज़ पर...

"जागो! जागो! सुबह हुई,
रूस ने बाज़ी हारी है, हिंद पे लरज़ा तारी है,
अब कश्मीर की बारी है,
जागो जागो सुबह हुई।"

"ज़ालिमो, ओ काफ़िरो, कश्मीर हमारा छोड़ दो।"
"कश्मीर में अगर रहना है, अल्लाह-हो-अकबर कहना होगा।"
"मुसलमानो जागो, काफ़िरो भागो।"
"पाकिस्तान से क्या रिश्ता? ला इलाह-ए-इल्लाहा।"
"यहाँ क्या चलेगा? निज़ाम-ए-मुस्तफ़ा।"

और न जाने ऐसे कितने अनगिनत नारे,
अनगिनत मस्जिदों से लगाए गए एक ही वक्त पर,
और कुछ इस तरह हिंदू घाटी से भगाए गए एक ही वक्त पर...

दरवाज़ों पर पर्ती लगाकर शाम तक का वक्त दिया,
तुट गई इज़ज़त माँ-बेटियों की, ऐसा जिहादियों ने काम किया...

"मज़हब नहीं सिखाता आपस में बैर रखना"
तब महज़ एक जुमला सा रह गया...
जब मज़हब के नाम पर ही महज़ हिंदुओं का खून बह गया...

यह घटना जब घटित हुई तब देश में मातम छाना था,
कानों-कान खबर न हुई क्योंकि सत्ता को बचाना था...

वहाँ सियासी खेल ने भी ऐसा ही कुछ रूख लिया,
खुद की हिफ़ाज़त कर लाखों को घर से बाहर किया...
जिहादियों ने जिहाद के खातिर सिर्फ़ एक ही कौम पर वार किया,
छुपकर नहीं, सरेआम गोली दागकर पूरे बाज़ार को लाल किया...

खुद के आशियाने को खंडहर बनते देखा है मैंने...
अपनों को खुद से जुदा, जिंदा को मुर्दा होते देखा है मैंने...
बर्फ़ की वो सफ़ेद चादर का रंग बदलते देखा है मैंने...
झेलम की वो कल-कल करती आवाज़ को सुनसान होते देखा है मैंने...
मंदिरों को मस्जिद बनते देखा है मैंने...
एक आज़ाद वतन के झंडे को बदलते देखा है मैंने...

मेरे ही देश में मेरी ही पहचान से वाकिफ़ नहीं मैं...
बस कश्मीरी हूँ, कश्मीर का हिस्सा आज भी नहीं मैं...

उस ज़ाफ़रान की महक पर हक़ बस तुम्हारा नहीं था,
उन वादियों को शहज़ादी की तरह हमने भी सींचा था...
ये चंद लक़ीरें खींचकर भला कश्मीर कैसे छीन सकते हो,
अगर औकात है तो लाहौर हमें बेच सकते हो?

हमने बहाया नहीं अपनों के अस्थि-कलशों को,
सब समेटे रखा हुआ है...
उठाकर देख लो हमारी दास्ताँ,
तुम्हारे जिहाद तले हमारे साथ क्या अच्छा हुआ है...
और... वो इन्साफ़ कहाँ है?
अब तुम्हारा ईमान कहाँ रखा हुआ है?

बिन अपराध किए कुछ इस कदर दंडित किया गया हूँ मैं...
मैं पंडित था, मैं पंडित हूँ,
बस खंडित किया गया हूँ मैं...

Satan's innocence



Prisha Dwivedi

X (2025-26)

Lotus Valley International School, Noida

Fallen leaves and fading smiles,
amble across the darkest alleys.
Swept away in a frenzy of fear,
with unspoken rules to adhere.

Shoulders down, stand up tall.
Dare they find you fret or fall.
Strut the halls, fix your gown.
Chin high, erase that frown.

Disco nights with a whisky or two,
Midnight miseries and oh so blue.
Tottering around the same stops,
Credit cards out at every shop.

My dear lord, hear my plea,
Hear it loud and answer me.
Where is the innocence?
Where is the essence?
Where is the originality?
Where did we lose this purity?

To all my mates out there,
struggling to get a hold,
of themselves or their family.
for all of us, here's what the heavens told.

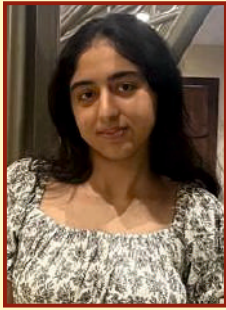
Seek for beyond, don't quench the thirst.
Let it flow through your veins, let it burst.
Sense the mighty trees, feel the gentle breeze.
Let your hair fall free, let yourself be at ease.

Embrace the child within, espouse the blissful life.
Surrender to the truth, submit to what is right.
Set your ambitions, progress to greater heights.
For what life is, but a journey to delight.

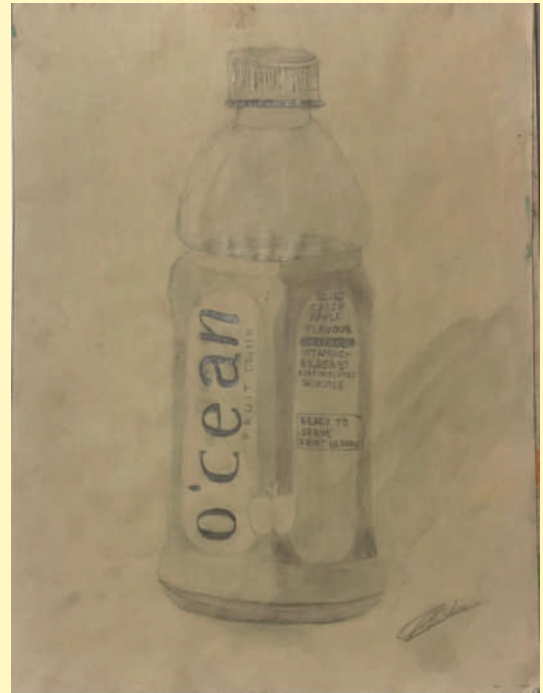
Learns Painting



*Sakshi Samvit Raina
Of Florida*



Chahel Rayu

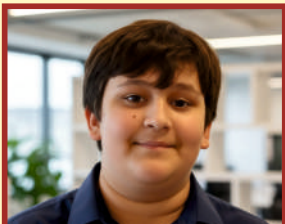




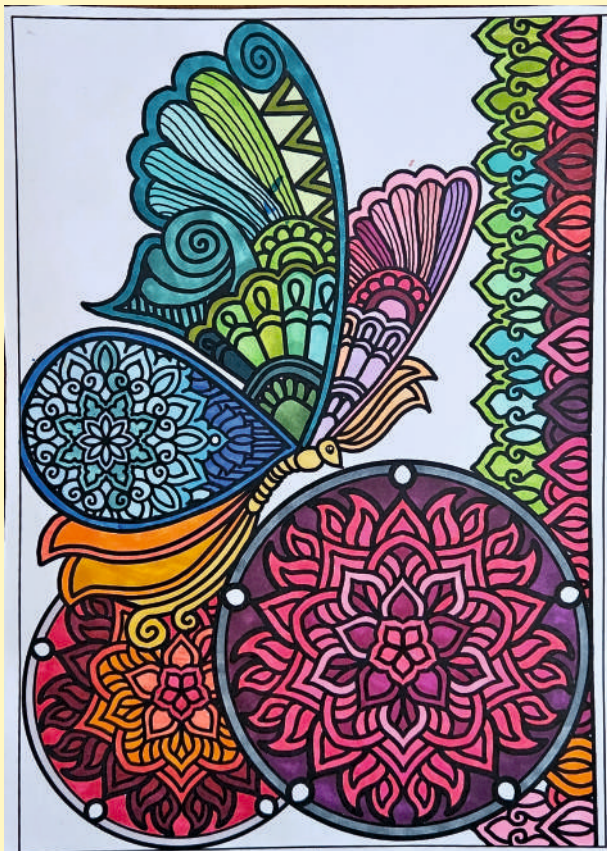
Anika Raina
Age:13 years

*The Indian Heights School
Dwarka, New Delhi*



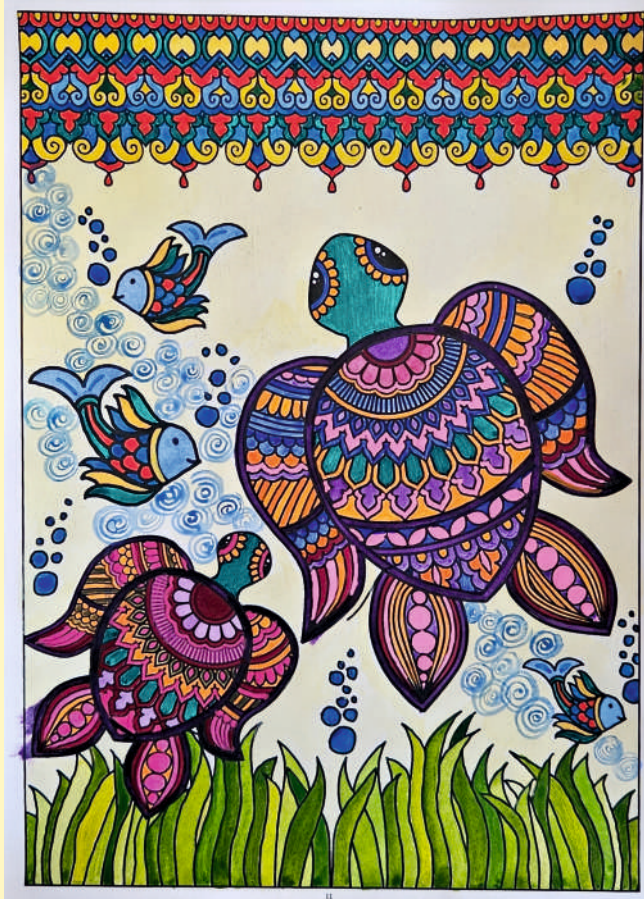


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