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Contents

02	Editorial	
03	Message from Chairman	
04	Messages	
11	Citation	
21	KECSS Activity Report	
28	Community Activity	
39	Shiva Incarnate to Enlighten the People	- Swami Lakshmanjoo
41	Bhagawaan Gopinath Ji : A Saint for the General Masses	- Deepak Kaul
43	Mata Roopa Bhawani	- Uma Kant Kachru
46	Ancestral Brilliance of Kashmir: Pratibignya Shastra and Modern Psychology	- Dr Raj Nehru
49	Our Historical Memory Deconstructing the Moral Edifice	- Ashok Kaul
51	Kaśmirasabdamrtam : An Introduction	- Prof. Satyabhama Razdan
53	Naichpater	- Ashwani Kumar Chrungoo
56	Identity	- M. H. Zaffar
58	Kashmir Culture in Turmoil	- T.N.Dhar 'Kundan'
61	Hybrid Marriages	- Tej N Dhar
63	Autism, Government Schemes and Need to Work on it in J&K and Ladakh after Abrogation of Article 370 of Indian Constitution	- Satish C Kaul
64	Chinar on Fire	- Deepak Budki
66	Kashmir Herbology	- Chander M Bhat
72	Vai or Vaigandar (Kashmiri Name)	- Ashok Manvati
74	Sharika Tirtha (Hari Parbat)	- Chaman Lal Gadoo
77	An Interview with Sunita Raina Pandit	- by Ravinder Gurtoo
88	Book Reviews	
	Koshur Ramayana - Pt. Sarvananda Kaul Premi	- Review by Dr Chaman Lal Raina
	"Doon and Other Stories" - Rohini Vaishnavi	- Review by Avtar Mota
	Kashmir: Hindu Religious Culture - Chaman Lal Gadoo	- Review by Triloki Nath Dhar 'Kundan'
86	Our Progeny : Children Corner - Art and Poetry	
93	नवरेह	- रोशन लाल 'रोशन'
94	मनच कामना	- रोशन लाल 'रोशन'
95	हांछ	- रिंकू कौल

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Disclaimer : The news and reports -writeups and articles - advertisements and promotions carried in this magazine are published as received. KECSS or Shuhul Taaph is not responsible for the veracity of the contents - Ed.

Please send your valuable feedback/suggestions to kecssglobal@yahoo.com or magazine.shuhultaaph@gmail.com

THIS RESOLUTE COMMITMENT?

This resolute commitment / tapasaya by the community, after 1990 catastrophe yielded worthy results to win that crisis situation, gracefully .

...Now the time has come that we, as a community shall show same resolute determination to keep commitment and nurture belongingness to, motherland and mother tongue – ancestry and heritage – religious inkling and spiritual commitment - cultural bond and social compassion. All this is important because life tends to becomes more and more burdensome as age comes up to load. When an individual, a family and a community integrates ingredients of ancestry, in making of the personality and life skills, life then is a virtue, all through. When the strength of muscle and money are losing virtues by and by, then it is only a vibrant and virtuous life skill – family support and social bond that is handier to stand by.

Every Kashmiri Pandit shall have same resolute determination to settle in Kashmir as a shareholder of the motherland. One can work anywhere in the world but Kashmir is our home. Every Kashmiri Pandit shall have same resolute determination, not to let the mother tongue get extinct in the community.

There are different processes of language learning. One of the ways, in structural process of language learning, is translation. Translation system of language learning is presently getting more and more prevalent because Google is strongly creeping in this area. Google is working to widen its base for Google Translation System. Kashmiri language in Nastaliq Script (persio-arabic Script) has been incorporated in google translation system. But the same system for Kashmir Devnagri Script is not there in google translation system.

When google translation system becomes efficient with artificial intelligence then the barriers between the languages will narrow and a day may come when an international language pool will do what English has been doing for so long. And Kashmiri in Devnagri Script shall not miss here. Having realised this objective, A Team is working to get Kashmiri Devnagri Script with in Google Translation System and for getting Kashmiri Devnagri incorporated in google translation system, there are different parameters that need to be met. The main areas are: 1 - A body of the Kashmir Devanagari shall be available online for google search engine. 2 - the tools of translation shall be available on google search engine. 3 - there shall be a technical team of professionals to develop a uniformity of Kashmiri Devnagri Script through Unicode etc. (some technical professionals are the founders of the team, they are on work) 4 - the authors, writers and all those, who write Kashmiri Devnagri shall put their materials online (some distinguished language experts and litterateurs are the funders of the team; they are on work) 5 - the manpower working today is little to meet the need, a wide community support at all levels of social functioning will make the project a success.

With my experience of GAASH Project, we, the team working on Google Translation Support System for Devnagri Kashmiri Script hope to have community resolute involvement and support.



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Prof. Bharat B. Dhar
Ph.D, McGill (Canada)
Chairman
JMC (KECSS & KCHBS)

March 26, 2024
profbbdhar@gmail.com

WELCOME TO SHUHUL TAAP-2024



The Kashmir Education, Culture and Science Society has again come forward with this year's Cultural Extravaganza, Shuhul Taaph-2024 to be held on 31st March, 2024 at Lalded Centre Complex, B-36 Pamposh Enclave, New Delhi-110048.

The success of this event solely depends on the active participation of our Biradari/Community from NCR, from other parts of India and at times some international participation. The series of events so far held since 10 years goes to prove beyond doubt the vigour and the confidence that you have bestowed on KECSS for its success. Shuhul Taaph could not be held for a couple of years due to Covid-19 Pandemic and other reasons.

The broad framework of the event will this year be one day performance paddled with socio-cultural activities from our community Artists of National and International fame maintaining high standards of selection of Awards and confirmation of them and selected program to ensure the event helps us to maintain the age old traditions of Kashmiriat in particular for our community outside Kashmir.

An exception this year will be the institution of the Second Award in the Memory of Mr. M.K. Kaw, (IAS Retd.), former Secretary of Higher Education, Government of India, our former President and architect of several Community Welfare activities. This year also the Award will be given to an eminent person in the field of "Higher Educational Services and Scientific Research and Development", to be announced at this function itself duly selected by reputed Jury of experts.

The cultural evening will have a formal inauguration together with KECSS Awards and felicitation on 31st March 2024 followed by Cultural events and usual dinner of Kashmiri cuisine.

This year we are fortunate to get the Event Shuhul Taaph-2024 inaugurated by former Justice of Supreme Court of India, Mr. Sanjay Krishan Kaul. The event will also have the blessings of Mrs. Shivani Kaul, his wife.

The members of the Executive and well-wishers will be keenly looking forward to the participation of you all at this unique fun filled activities.

We hope you will be reminded of your past culture and traditions.

Welcome to our members, friends and well-wishers to Shuhul Taaph-2024.

(Prof. B.B. Dhar)

Chairman, JMC (KECSS & KCHBS)

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R.K. Bhan
President

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

16 March, 2024

MESSAGE



As in the past, this year also it is a happy moment for whole of the Kashmir Pandit Community that Kashmir Education, Culture and Science Society – KECSS is holding the socio-cultural extravaganza, “Shuhul Taaph-2024.

This has been one of the most popular community programmes, full of enthusiasm and purpose. The programme consists of different events and everyone finds space to affiliate to.

The Annual issue of Shuhul Taaph magazine is to be released on the inaugural day by the Chief Guest. The magazine, as in the past, gives a deep look into the rich heritage of Kashmiri community at large.

I take this opportunity to convey my Shiv Ratri greetings and best wishes to all my young and old colleagues to successfully accomplish the event Shuhul Taaph-2024.


R.K. Bhan
President

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

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Kuldip Chogtu
Secretary
JMC (KCHBS & KECSS)

20 March, 2024

MESSAGE



I am immensely pleased and very happy that KECSS is celebrating the Cultural Extravaganza, Shuhul Taaph this year on 31st March 2024 which started way back in the year 2009.

KECSS has been playing a great role in acknowledging the contribution of personalities from our community in the field

Culture, Education, Science and Technology, Medical Science, Arts, Public Services.

I feel myself a privileged lot to be associated with the same.

I on behalf of Joint Managing Committee (KCHBS & KECSS) and on my behalf wish the event a great success.


Kuldip Chogtu
Secretary - JMC (KCHBS & KECSS)

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Kapil Kaul
General Secretary

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

March 28, 2024

MESSAGE



It gives me immense pleasure to note that the Kashmir Education, Culture and Science Society is organizing the Annual Cultural Extravaganza – Shuhul Taaph-2024 on 31 March 2024.

I am privileged to be associated with KECSS and join the Managing Committee of KECSS. I have been associated with the organization for over a year, now. It is not that I have not been aware of the great work that is being done by our organization for many decades. My grandfather, Late Shri. Bal Krishan Kaul (retired Civil Servant) whom I saw from a very young age, serving the community and working relentlessly for the social causes of our community. For me it was just a matter of time or probably just the right time to get in the thick of things as a young generation social volunteer to start serving our community. I would urge all our community's younger general that if we take some time out from our busy schedules to dedicate towards our community, we will be passing this onto our next generations for good. Do we want our future generals to be completely oblivious of our culture and heritage? So, I via this message would request all younger generations to take some time out and get involved in community activities. It is not only fun, but more importantly gives an immense satisfaction to be able to contribute in creating the next generation that is socially and culturally rich.

I take this opportunity to thank all the participants in this cultural extravaganza for their relentless support.

I wish Shuhul Taaph -2024 a grand success.


Kapil Kaul
General Secretary

Prof. Ashok Ogra

Advisor, Apeejay Education

Formerly : Vice President, Discovery Channel (South Asia)



MESSAGE

Living a migrant life encompasses both settling in new places and experiencing the unsettling feeling of uprooting. The loss of a home can evoke a range of emotions, from mild longing to profound trauma. We find ourselves navigating what Spanish psychiatrist Joseba Achotegui terms 'Migratory Mourning'—the emotional toll of the losses incurred through migration. Yet, migration poses the question: Is it solely about leaving, or does it also involve a potential return?

For us, the valley that has been a witness to targeted violence is gradually becoming elusive, making the prospect of return increasingly difficult. Now, we find ourselves in a foreign land with its distinct cultural framework.

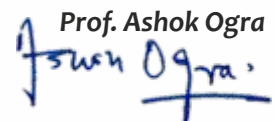
The primary challenge our community faces is the threat of 'cultural extinction.' Culture is multifaceted—it encompasses the philosophy, cuisine, traditions, customs, music, and literature of a people. Despite being globally minded and carrying India in our hearts, we take pride in our Kashmiri Pandit heritage.

This commitment drives the efforts of the Kashmir Education, Culture, and Science Society (KECSS) in its mission to preserve and celebrate our intellectual and artistic achievements.

This year, KECSS is excited to host the annual 'SHUHUL TAAPH' 2024, a celebration featuring key cultural activities such as theatre and musical plays, dance, comedy, and live music performances, alongside an exclusive art exhibition. The KECSS Awards will also recognize community members who have demonstrated excellence in various fields.

Indeed, while societies evolve and cultures adapt, it is crucial to safeguard what is meaningful and enduring, while also welcoming new expressions that reflect our changing times. KECSS has exemplified this balance through its dedication and excellence over the years.

I extend my heartfelt wishes for 'SHUHUL TAAPH' 2024 to achieve grand success. I hope it inspires our youth to engage actively with our community's affairs, ensuring our unique cultural identity remains vibrant. After all, a community without knowledge of its past history, origins, and culture is akin to a tree devoid of roots.

Prof. Ashok Ogra




ALL INDIA KASHMIRI SAMAJ (REGD.)

(APEX BODY OF INDIAN & OVERSEAS KASHMIRI PANDIT ORGANISATIONS)

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MESSAGE

Dr. Ramesh Raina
President, AIKS

Dear Dhar Sahab,

I am extremely happy to learn that KECSS is hosting its memorable event SHUHUL TAAPH, an annual feature, this year also. I extend my heartiest and warm congratulations to team KECSS on hosting and organising the event. The success of SHUHUL TAAPH is illustrative of an excellent teamwork, planning and preparation to ensuring everything runs smoothly by KECSS under your able guidance. The success of the event has shown a great level of commitment and it takes skill and dedication to pull off a successful event like this each year. It is because of this it has received a wide attention of the community. It has been years now since I have been both waiting and watching this event with great enthusiasm. I am incredibly proud of your enriching journey, accomplishments and contributions that your years of service represent.

SHUHUL TAAPH, in recent years, has become an important platform which provides an opportunity to the community language activists, cultural activists and all those noble people who are seen trying hard to keep language and other socio-cultural practices alive in an alien land to the extent possible. As all of us are aware that religion, language and culture grows on its own soil; therefore, it is through these events we try to create an environment of Kashmir while being away from it.

It indeed is a recognition and acknowledgement of your efforts in sustaining and keeping the interest alive in the event ever since its inception. I am aware that there will be many more such success stories in the future after this one.

While concluding, I acknowledge that the love and passion put into its making is enormous and is really praise worthy. Congratulations once again! I wish the event a great success!

Dr. Ramesh Raina

AIKS affiliated Units at:

- Inland** : Agra, Ahmedabad, Allahabad, Ambala, Amritsar, Bangalore, Bahadurgarh, Baroda, Bhopal, Chandigarh, Dehradun, Delhi, Dharamshala, Faridabad, Ghaziabad, Gurgraon, Gwalior, Hyderabad, Indrapuram, Indore, Jabalpur, Jaipur, Jammu, Jodhpur, Kolkata, Lucknow, Ludhiana, Mumbai, Moradabad, Nagpur, Noida, Panchkula, Pune, Ranchi, Sahibabad, Shimla, Srinagar, Udaipur, Varanasi
- Overseas** : U.K. & U.S.A

Ashok Kaul

*IIAS Fellow, Baden-Baden, Germany, &
Retired Emeritus Professor of sociology, Banaras Hindu University*



MESSAGE

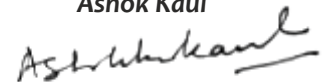
Ours is not a settled memory existence, unlike other confessional religions and Advaita. It is generating with ideas and lived life celebration that is what Trika is all about. Advaita treats it a phenomenon (Maya), and whereas other religions like, Islam and Christianity believe in settled historical memory. Kashmiri Shaivism is exploration of newness, recognition and celebrations of lived life experiences.

Shuhul Taaph is one such cultural event, organized by KECSS that has overcome the schism of dislocation and dualism. It was born out of the crisis of displacement. Its grooming leadership has been persons of class, stature and vision. We remember them with gratitude. One of the perennial concerns has been our identity, causality and ethics, striving to answer questions such as 'what are we' and 'what should we do'? Therefore, it has been a holistic endeavor on the canvass of music, academics, art and sciences, a capsule to understand whether we have been able to transcend ourselves or we are bound by the materiality. Our continuity and its generic make up, its recognition and legacy for posterity is meshed in occasion, a daylong events to be enjoyed on 31st of March 2024. It is our common undertaking, recognitions and celebrations that could be enjoyed only through participatory involvement.

Our appreciations to the organizers and we wish them all success.

March 19th, 2024

Ashok Kaul

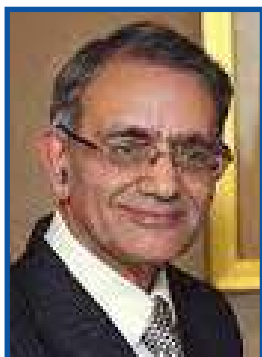




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MESSAGE

It is truly gratifying to see that Kashmir Education Culture Science Society (KECSS) is bringing forth this year's publication of Shuhul Taaph and will also be organizing a cultural and literary program. KECSS stands as a significant and influential society dedicated to preserving Kashmiri culture and traditions alive amongst the younger generation of the community, particularly among those who have grown up post the forced exodus of the Kashmiri Pandit community from Kashmir in 1990. Their steadfast efforts have provided a platform for various other organizations within their campus at Pamposh Enclave, New Delhi. They also reach out to the membership of other organizations in National Capital Territory and elsewhere.

Moreover, KECSS has consistently honoured community members for their outstanding achievements and contributions in their respective areas as also for the preservation of social and cultural fabric. As we move forward, I believe it is essential for KECSS to further strengthen its ties with academicians, and scholars, undertaking projects and publishing research based articles and books showcasing our contributions to philosophy, arts, aesthetics science, and other areas. We must also critically examine how the current socio-economic ecosystem within our community will impact the preservation of our language, religiosity, familial trends in future.

I extend my heartfelt greeting and salute the Team Shuhul Taaph, the office bearers of KECSS and Kashmiri Group Housing Society, Pamposh Enclave, New Delhi, for their unwavering commitment to addressing the education and cultural challenges facing the community.

Sudhir K. Sopory, Professor

SERB Distinguished Fellow and Senior Emeritus Scientist

ICGEB

Former: Vice Chancellor, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi

: Group Leader and Director, ICGEB



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

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

KECSS Award of Distinction-2024

on

Mr. Vivek Raina

*For his outstanding contributions in the field of
Modern Broadband Industry-Media and Communication.*



Mr. Vivek Raina, is an industry veteran with over 20 years of experience in the Broadband Industry. As the Founder and CEO of Excitel, he's on a mission to connect every corner of BHARAT, and this mission is successfully reflected in the growth of Excitel. In just eight years, Vivek has propelled Excitel to become the third-largest Fiber-to-Home internet service provider in India. Their footprint now extends across 55+ cities in the country, with a remarkable one million subscribers enjoying their services. Vivek's leadership has been instrumental in bringing unlimited internet broadband to the masses, making lives better and more connected.

Today, Excitel goes beyond a growing start-up; it's a formidable team of 3,000+ dedicated employees. In the competitive industry landscape, Excitel has firmly established itself as the third-largest player alongside with their recent revenue turnover hitting 600 crores.

Vivek's journey is a testament to his exceptional leadership skills. Along the way, he has also worked with companies such as Hathway, Reliance, and Pacenet, leaving a lasting impact on the broadband industry before founding Excitel.

*The Kashmir Education, Culture and Science Society feels proud to present the
KECSS Distinguished Award-2024 to Mr. Vivek Raina for his outstanding
contributions in the field of Modern Broadband Industry -
Media and Communication.*

B.B. Dhar

Prof. B. B. Dhar

Chairman,

JMC, KECSS

R.K. Bhan

R. K. Bhan

President,

KECSS

Kapil Kaul

Kapil Kaul

Gen. Secretary,

KECSS

New Delhi, 31 March, 2024





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 - 2024

on

Dr. Sidharth Kaul



*For his outstanding contributions in the field of
Environment and Ecology with special reference to Wetlands.*

Dr. Kaul is the former Advisor (Wetlands) to the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Government of India.

Dr. Kaul has an experience of more than 50 years in conservation and sustainable development of wetlands in India and abroad.

He coordinated the National Wetland Conservation for over four decades, playing a key role in fulfilling Government of India's obligations to several international conventions including Ramsar Convention, and has been associated with several international conservation organisations e.g., UNESCO biosphere Reserve Committee, Board of Directors of Wetland International, Ramsar Focal Point for 15 years, International Supervisory Council of Wetland International for 15 years International Lake Environment Committee Foundation (ILEC), member of many state wetland committees from time to time.

Dr. Kaul's work experience ranges from formulation of management plans for wetlands and biosphere reserves, ecotourism development, communication, education and public awareness (CEPA), monitoring and evaluation and capacity building. He has been appointed on several committees constituted by Government of India for conservation and management of wetlands.

Mainstreaming the concerns of local communities and their traditional knowledge into wetland management action plans has been one of his key work areas. He has worked on several assignments for the national and state governments as well as initiatives of international development agencies including World Bank, Asian Development Bank, Department for International Development and others.

A limnologist by training, Dr. Kaul has been actively promoting research and development in the field of conservation and management of wetlands and has published extensively in national and international journals. He has published over 100 research papers in leading international and national journals, and over 100 technical reports on conservation and management of wetlands, biosphere reserves, ecotourism development, high altitude wetlands, community participation in wetland conservation, communication, education and public awareness.

*The Kashmir Education, Culture and Science Society feels proud to present the
KECSS Life Time Achievement Award-2024 to Dr. Sidharth Kaul for his
outstanding contributions in the field of Environment and Ecology with special reference to
Wetlands.*

Prof. B. B. Dhar

Chairman,

JMC, KECSS

R. K. Bhan

President,

KECSS

Kapil Kaul

Gen. Secretary,

KECSS

New Delhi, 31 March, 2024





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

New Delhi

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

KECSS Award of Honour - 2024

on

Mr. Ravinder Ravi



For his outstanding contributions for promoting Kashmiri Language.

Mr. Ravinder Ravi is a truly remarkable contributor to Kashmiri news broadcasting, language and literature. He has become quite a household name in Kashmiri community. A prolific news broadcaster, he presently heads the Kashmiri news unit in News Services Division, AIR, New Delhi. He had been entrusted with another responsibility of heading Sanskrit unit also, and furthermore was considered worthy of running Nepali unit too for some time. Besides being a news broadcaster Ravinder Ravi is a sensitive literary critic and poet of Kashmiri literature. He has authored three books including 2 poetry collections. In addition, most of his poems have seen print in various prestigious magazines and journals. Spanning to more than 30 years as a writer, he has written numerous well-acclaimed articles on varied subjects. His profound contribution to 'Samachar Bharti' and 'Shiraza Kashmiri' has been appreciated and recognised by eminent critics. For his significant contribution to Samachar Bharti of NSD, he was awarded "Sarva Shreshth Rachna Puraskar" by the then DG News in 2014. His translation work too has been hailed. He translated monograph on Ramdhari Singh Dinkar in Kashmiri for Sahitya Akademi.

Holder of Masters in Kashmiri from University of Kashmir, news and language experts have reviewed his diction, syntax, news reading and translations as more communicative, lively and excellent. Several of his poems have been translated into Hindi and other languages by eminent literary personalities. He has attended workshops under the aegis of Central Hindi directorate in different parts of the country. Ravinder Ravi represented Kashmiri language in Bhartiya Kavita Utsav organised by Hindi Academy, Delhi-NCR, Delhi government in 2010. All the poems that Ravi read out during Kavita Utsav were published in Hindi Academy's prestigious magazine, Indraprastha Bharti. He represented Kashmiri language in two-day multi-lingual Poet's Meet in Mizoram under the aegis of Sahitya Akademi and Mizo Academy of Letters in 2018. J&K Academy of Art, Culture and Languages chose his poem for its prestigious 'Soun Adab' special edition.

Ravinder Ravi has been a leading creative writer actively engaged in the literary and cultural activities. He has been conducting, moderating and comparing literary and cultural programs also. His poems undoubtedly express a genuine poetic feeling that is a blend of abstract and contemporary sensibility. Dr. Shafi Shauq describes Ravi's poetry like a "spring breeze that irrigates a reader's mind and soul".

*The Kashmir Education, Culture and Science Society feels proud to present the
KECSS Award of Honor-2024 to Mr. Ravinder Ravi for his outstanding
contributions for promoting Kashmiri Language.*

B.B. Dhar

Prof. B. B. Dhar

Chairman,

JMC, KECSS

R.K. Bhan

R. K. Bhan

President,

KECSS

Kapil Kaul

Kapil Kaul

Gen. Secretary,

KECSS

New Delhi, 31 March, 2024





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

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

KECSS Award of Distinction - 2024

on

Air Vice Marshal (Dr) Ram Krishan Ganjoo AVSM VSM Retd.

For his outstanding contributions in the field of Medical Sciences.



Dr. R.K. Ganjoo is a Senior Consultant Internal Medicine & Haemato Oncology. His specialization is in the field of Internal Medicine & Clinical Haematology. He Served in the Armed Forces Medical Services for four decades from 1972-2009. His Last appointment in Service was Commandant (Chief Executive & Principal) of the Command Hospital Air Force, Bangalore, 850 bed, premiere tertiary care hospital of the IAF, under the RGUHS and recognised by the MCI for post graduate teaching in broad specialties. During Service Career he also held the posts of Air Officer Commanding, AFCME, Subroto Park, Professor, Senior Advisor & HOD Medicine & Clinical Haematology at Command Hospital Bangalore and Staff Surgeon to the Chief of the Sir Staff.

Post retirement he held the position of Director Medical, Sir Ganga Ram Hospital, New Delhi and thereafter continued for a year as Visiting Senior Consultant Medicine & Clinical Haematology, Sir Ganga Ram Hospital, New Delhi.

Academic Credentials of Dr. Ganjoo includes MBBS: Graduated from the prestigious Armed Forces Medical College, Pune, MD (Gen Med): Pune University, Post Graduate Clinical Research Fellowship (Clinical Haematology & Haemato Oncology), St Bartholomew's Hospital, London University and Certified Clinical Haematologist, Royal College of Physicians (UK)

Dr. Ganjoo holds the Membership & Fellowships of National Academy of Medical Sciences (MNAMS), Fellow Indian College of Physicians (FICP), Fellow Aerospace Medical Society (FAeMS) and Permanent Member of Indian Society of Haematology & Blood Transfusion.

Dr. Ganjoo has to his credit many Honours and Awards and he is twice recipient of Award for distinguished medical services of an extremely high order on 26 Jan 1976 & 26 Jan 2006, by the Honourable President of India (Vishist Sewa Medal & Ati Vishist Sewa Medal) and Awarded the Dr PN Berry Scholarship in the year (1991-1993), for Post Graduate Fellowship & Clinical Research in Clinical Haematology, by the Indian High Commission.

He has to his credit over over 50 National & International publications.

The Kashmir Education, Culture and Science Society feels proud to present the **KECSS Distinguished Award-2024** to Air Vice Marshal (Dr) Ram Krishan Ganjoo AVSM VSM Retd. for his outstanding contributions in the field of Medical Sciences.

B.B. Dhar

Prof. B.B. Dhar

Chairman,

JMC, KECSS

R.K. Bhan

R.K. Bhan

President,

KECSS

Kapil Kaul

Kapil Kaul

Gen. Secretary,

KECSS

New Delhi, 31 March, 2024





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

New Delhi

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

KECSS Award of Honour - 2024

on

Mr. Arvind Shah



For his outstanding contributions in the field of Language and Literature.

Arvind Shah is a writer, poet and translator. He had for some time worked in Islamia College of Science and Commerce. Since exodus from Kashmir in 1990 Mr. Arvind Shah has worked in Corporate Sector with different Companies, but he switched over to join a Multinational Childcare Organisation: SOS - India, as Assistant to President and Coordinator Schools and Education, for all the Schools and Professional Institutions run by the organisation, all over the country.

He has been a pen-active person, since early School days. During college days, he wrote and produced Children's Programmes for DD Srinagar. He has been regularly writing for publishers, and social magazines and literary journals that include Indian Literature and Literary Criterion.

Now, Mr. Arvind is a full time freelance writer. Presently he writes for Prabhat Prakashan and Dreamland Publishers. He has authored 25 published books and about 100 editorials and articles - papers in seminars, conferences and workshops. His publications include Children's Books, Academic Books for School Children, Translations and Biographies.

Some of his Best Sellers: Children's Books : Cute Baby Books - Children's Book Series with illustrations by Tom Arma, My book of phonics - Publisher Dreamland. Pictorial Multicolour Devnagri Kashmiri Primer Publisher Sangarmall Foundation.

Educational Books: Handbook of Communication Skills and English Grammar, A set of books in a Series on Parts of Speech. Publisher Prabhat Prakashan; Translations : Selected Poems Atal Bihari Vajpayee Translated into English, Publisher Prabhat Prakashan and Words and Vibes Selected Kashmiri Poems Translated into English Publisher Sangarmall Foundation; Biography: Life and times of Virat Kohli.

Mr. Arvind has been associated with Govt of India as Member of different expert groups - Ministry of Culture a) Selection Committee Member for Awards of fellowships b) Expert Committee Member to vet translation works of literary books before publication, Ministry of Education for writing Kashmiri Hindi Kashmiri Vartalap Pustak, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, As an Expert on Socio-cultural subjects on Radio broadcasts and TV telecasts by All India Radio Srinagar and DD Kashmir. Also as an expert to vet TV serial scripts and to preview productions before telecast on DD Kashmir.

He is associated with various Social and Literary Organizations, some of them are Akhil Bhartiya Sahitya Parishad: National Executive Committee Member. Kashmir Cultural Trust: Advisory Committee Member.

*The Kashmir Education, Culture and Science Society feels proud to present the
KECSS Award of Honor-2024 to Mr. Arvind Shah for his outstanding
contributions in the field of Arts and Literature.*

Prof. B. B. Dhar

Chairman,

JMC, KECSS

R. K. Bhan

President,

KECSS

Kapil Kaul

Gen. Secretary,

KECSS

New Delhi, 31 March, 2024





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

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

KECSS Award for Media and Journalism-2024

on

Ms. Priyanka Tikoo

For her outstanding contributions in the field of Media and Journalism.



Ms. Priyanka Tikoo is the Deputy Executive Editor, Press Trust of India (PTI), Delhi.

Ms. Priyanka started her career with PTI as a trainee journalist in 1997. A post-graduate in journalism, she has more than 25 years of work experience. She is the first woman National Bureau Chief and subsequently the first woman Editor and Deputy Executive Editor in the history of PTI, India's biggest news agency.

Ms. Priyanka extensively reported on high-profile prime ministerial visits, including to Pakistan, Afghanistan, Germany, Iran and the US and interviewed world leaders including Russian President Vladimir Putin.

*The Kashmir Education, Culture and Science Society feels proud to present the
KECSS Award for Media and Journalism-2024 to Ms. Priyanka Tikoo for her
outstanding contributions in the field of Media & Journalism.*

Prof. B.B. Dhar
Chairman,
JMC, KECSS

R.K. Bhan
President,
KECSS

Kapil Kaul
Gen. Secretary,
KECSS

New Delhi, 31 March, 2024





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

New Delhi

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

KECSS Award of Honour - 2024

on

Smt. Sushma Kalla



For her outstanding contributions in the field of Music, Dance and Drama.

Smt Sushma Kalla is a well-known AIR Artist. Born in Kashmir, she did her Masters in Vocal classical from Punjab university under the guidance of Pt Shambhu Nath Sopori (Sopori Gharana). Under the Banner of Studio Six of AIR Kashmir Smt. Sushma ji earned fame in light music with so many Kashmiri, Urdu and Sufi songs Composed by Padamshree Pt Bhajan Sopori like Wav Sontuk Gulan Wanan Chonuy by Farooq Nazki, Mane Buziv Yiman Kalamam Hosh ha Hosh by Shri Vasudev Reh, Bob Bomrun soz by Rafiq Raz, Be Chas dramech yaras Pata etc

She has been working as a Music Teacher in Kendriya Vidyalaya for the last 26 years and was awarded several times for her performances

Sushma ji has lent her voice to many TV Serials like Saaye Devdaar Ke, Gul Gulshan Gulfaam, Lalded, Kehna Asaan Hai, Ruph Bhawani.

With music Albums like Soz-e-Dil, Shradha Posh Vakhi te vachun, Aahee of Pt P.N. Kaul Sayil and many others Sushma ji has been regularly performing in national cultural programmes as well as Internationally in countries like US, UK, HongKong, Australia and Nepal.

For her dedicated services to Kashmiri Community she has been honoured with Kshemendra Award and Maa Sharika Sammaan.

Smt. Sushma Kalla is closely associated with KECSS and has performed during Shuhul Taaph -2023.

*The Kashmir Education, Culture and Science Society feels proud to present the KECSS
Award of Honor-2024 to Smt. Sushma Kalla for her outstanding contributions in the field of
Music, Dance and Drama*

B.B. Dhar

Prof. B.B. Dhar

Chairman,

JMC, KECSS

R.K. Bhan

R.K. Bhan

President,

KECSS

Kapil Kaul

Kapil Kaul

Gen. Secretary,

KECSS

New Delhi, 31 March, 2024





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 - 2024

on

Mr. Pyare Lal Nehru

*For his outstanding contributions in the field of Heritage,
Society and Social Work,*



Mr. Pyare Lal Nehru born in Kashmir graduated from Jammu & Kashmir University in the year 1955.

He shifted to Delhi in November 1955 and joined Insurance Company. He worked there up to 1963. His expertise includes Accounts and Business Management.

He worked as Accounts Head and Legal Consultant for trading concerns which dealt in plastics polymers, up to 2020. He contributed in public relations and social as well as community activities.

He has made immense contributions to Kashmir Education, Culture and Science Society (KECSS) and is currently the Trustee of Shiv Mandir, Pamposh.

*The Kashmir Education, Culture and Science Society feels proud to present the
KECSS Life Time Achievement Award - 2024 to Mr. Pyare Lal Nehru for his
outstanding contributions in the field of Heritage, Society and Social Work.*

Prof. B.B. Dhar

Chairman,

JMC, KECSS

R.K. Bhan

President,

KECSS

Kapil Kaul

Gen. Secretary,

KECSS

New Delhi, 31 March, 2024





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 - 2024

on

Mr. Hira Lal Wangnoo

For his outstanding contributions in the field of Social Work,



Mr. Wangnoo has been involved in welfare activities for children and students from an early age. He was a member of Balkan Ji Bari, an all-India Child Welfare organization as well as other welfare organizations and NGOs in the 1950s and 1960s. During his school and college years, he actively participated in welfare fund raising and cultural programs for Cheshire Homes and old age homes. He was President of the Kashmir University Students Union and Secretary of Welfare and Cultural Committee of the University.

Mr. Wangnoo joined SOS India in 1967. During his many years of service, he was a core team member of SOS India, under the leadership of the President and Secretary General for SOS India and SOS KDI. He assisted in formulating policies and training programs for children, mothers and staff. He assisted in initiating, developing and implementation of SOS projects all over India. His responsibilities included public relations – print and visual media (Film on SOS – Roots & Wings), budgetary and tax matters. He initiated Children Money Gift Schemes.

Mr. Wangnoo held many positions at SOS India and SOS KDI including Administrative and Executive Officer, Executive Secretary, Director, SOS Children's Villages, Secretary General, SOS India, Regional Director SOS KDI and Advisor to President, SOS KDI. Mr. Wangnoo is a recipient of many awards and honours including Life Time Achievement Award – SOS India, SOS Golden Ring of Honour – SOS KDI.

Mr. Wangnoo played a major role in establishing SOS projects in Central Asia with the support and co-operation of SOS KDI, the respective governments and NGOs. Mr. Wangnoo travelled all-over the world in connection with SOS India and SOS KDI

The Kashmir Education, Culture and Science Society feels proud to present the KECSS Life Time Achievement Award - 2024 to Mr. Hira Lal Wangnoo for his outstanding contributions in the field of Social Work.

B. B. Dhar

Prof. B. B. Dhar

Chairman,

JMC, KECSS

R. K. Bhan

R. K. Bhan

President,

KECSS

Kapil Kaul

Kapil Kaul

Gen. Secretary,

KECSS

New Delhi, 31 March, 2024





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 Distinguished Award - 2024

on

Mr. Chaman Lal Gadoo



For his outstanding contributions for Historical Preservation of Kashmir Temples and Heritage.

Mr. Chaman Lal Gadoo, born in Srinagar, Kashmir, and an engineer by profession, has been an ardent social activist and a prolific writer. Politically, Gadoo is supporter of Hindu nationalism. He is deeply involved in the Hindu resistance movement, against Muslim separatism in Kashmir and has spent last fifty years in public welfare activities. Gadoo has been in the midst of the relief and rehabilitation of the Hindus of Kashmir, displaced due to the aftermath of the militant violence in Kashmir. He worked diligently for the Kashmiri cause, first as the President of Kashmiri Samiti, Delhi (nodal agency for displaced Kashmiri Hindus) and then President, BJP, J&K cell, Delhi Pradesh, for more than two decades. He has been Vice-President of All India Kashmiri Samaj also is associated with Kashmir Education, Culture and Science Society, New Delhi and many other organizations. He is Co-Chairman, Joint Human Rights committee and Chairman, Vidya Gauri Gadoo Research Centre. He has been raising issues faced by displaced persons before National Human Rights Commission, for more than twenty years and also before Standing Parliamentary Committee on Rehabilitation of J&K Migrants during 2007. Gadoo has widely travelled and represented Kashmiri Hindus at many national and international fora.

He has authored several books and was associated with Dr. M.K. Teng in drafting of the 'White Paper on Kashmir' which was published by Joint Human Rights Committee and released by K.N. Sahani, in 1996, earlier Human Rights Violations in Kashmir was released by A.B. Vajpayee in 1993. Gadoo's other books like Kashmir---Militancy & Human Rights, Terrorism & Human Rights Violations in Jammu & Kashmir, Kashmir---The Bitter Truth, Kashmir-Greater Autonomy were released from time to time. Gadoo's book Kashmir Hindu Shrines was released by Swami Ramdev during 2009. His other book Kashmir Hindu Religious Culture was released at a largely attended function of Shuhul - Taaph at LALDED Centre, New Delhi, during 2015 by community stalwarts. Another book Saga of Survival was released by Union Minister, Pashupati Kumar Paras, during 2021. His book Ganga Tirthas was released by Swami Prabodhanand Giri, President, Hindu Raksha Sena, during 2023. Apart from monographs he has been writing e-books on different subjects and are circulated free of any charge regularly. His research papers appear regularly in different magazines all over India.

*The Kashmir Education, Culture and Science Society feels proud to present the
KECSS Life Time Award-2024 to Mr. Chaman Lal Gadoo for his outstanding
contributions for Historical Preservation of Kashmir Temples and Heritage.*

B.B. Dhar

Prof. B.B. Dhar

Chairman,

JMC, KECSS

R.K. Bhan

R.K. Bhan

President,

KECSS

Kapil Kaul

Kapil Kaul

Gen. Secretary,

KECSS

New Delhi, 31 March, 2024



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



M.K. KAW MEMORIAL AWARD 2024
Presented to



Prof. (Dr.) R.N.K. Bamezai

For his outstanding contributions in the field of
HIGHER EDUCATIONAL SERVICES & SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

SHUHUL TAAPH-2024

on

31st March, 2024

B.B. Dhar

*Prof. B.B. Dhar
Chairman,
JMC, KECSSS*

R.K. Bhan

*R.K. Bhan
President,
KECSSS*

Kapil Kaul

*Kapil Kaul
Gen. Secretary,
KECSSS*

New Delhi, 31 March, 2024





KECSS Activity Report

- : Secretary's Office

K.E.C.S.S, is an off shoot of Kashmir CO-OP House Building Society (Ltd.) (KCHBS); The main objectives of the Society are to promote Kashmir Culture, Language, Arts, Literature and Science, to encourage study and research in these fields, and to establish and operate Libraries, Reading Rooms and other, and to provide facilities and amenities, in furthering of these objectives.

Kashmir Education, Culture & Science Society (Regd.) (K.E.C.S.S) was constituted and registered way back in 1966, in New Delhi. The sole objective of this society is to 'Preserve and Sustain the Kashmiri Art, Culture, Language and Heritage'.

The members of the KECSS are drawn from all walks of life; writers, artists (Radio, Stage and Electronics), scientists, authors, literary critics, academicians, journalists, irrespective of cast, creed, and religion. It is an apolitical body.

KECSS has been organizing academic and

scientific seminars/discussions/deliberations pertaining to Kashmir. In addition, we organize stage and musical performances for budding artists from the State along with professionals.

Briefly below are summarized the programmes organized by Kashmir Education, Culture and Science Society (Regd.), for the year 2023-2024 under its banner are as under:

1. Shuhul Taaph 2023: KECSS (Kashmir Education, Culture and Science Society's) annual Cultural Extravaganza, Shuhul Taaph-2023 was organized on 11th & 12th February 2023, at the KECSS community center located at Lal Ded Complex, Pamposh Enclave, New Delhi-110048. The main highlights of this Cultural Extravaganza, Release of Annual magazine Shuhul Taaph, KECSS Awards function, followed by cultural entertainment and so on promoting Kashmiri Culture.



2. **Navreh Celebrations:** were organized at KECSS community center located at Lal Ded Complex, Pamposh Enclave, New Delhi-110048 on 22nd March 2023. Audience enjoyed the musical extravaganza followed by an authentic Kashmiri Snacks & special arrangement for those on fast on Navreh. Fruits/ packets of salt were given to ladies as a token of tradition at the end of the programme.

3. **Screening of Mahameshwaracharya Abhinavagupta:** On 25th June 2023, KECSS did the Screening of “**Mahameshwaracharya Abhinavagupta**”, a documentary film by Shri. Suraj Raina at Lal Ded Complex, Pamposh Enclave, New Delhi-110048.

4. **Book Launch:** On 25th June 2023, book “**A Banquet of Philosophical and Devotional Hymns of Abhinavaguptacharya**”, written by Shri. Moti Lal Pandit was organized.

5. **Annual Fest SHIKARA :** A two-day fest “SHIKARA” on the 4th & 5th November 2023 at Lal Ded Complex, Pamposh Enclave, New Delhi-110048, to celebrate Kashmir & Kashmiriyat. The event was organized by “Kashmir Education, Culture & Science Society (K.E.C.S.S)”, and was Co-Powered by, Invest Mango, Jayanti Motors Pvt. Limited, In Association with DBS bank, Poshte as gifting partner and Excitel as Internet Partners.

The event was inaugurated by **Honorable Lieutenant Governor of Jammu & Kashmir Shri Manoj Sinha, on 4th of November 2023.**

Day 1 also witnessed a live performance by **Aabha Hanjura**, which left the crowd mesmerized.

Day 2 started with Live telecast of India v/s South Africa on a big screen, followed by some beautiful live singing and dance performances on Kashmir based songs from bollywood.

This event was one of its kinds, it also had around 16 niche stalls to showcase Kashmiri Cuisine & Culture (including, Artifacts, Handloom, clothing, Spices etc.) The event witnessed a huge turn out on both days, and crowd had a great mix of people across all communities and religion.

“This event was created to promote Kashmir & Kashmiriyat to masses. This year, in its second avtaar, the event not only has become grandeur but at the same time has been able to attract more cultures & communities to experience Kashmiri culture, and hospitality. The event witnessed a lot of Youth participation as well, which tells us that we are going in the right direction.” **Said Shri Kapil Kaul**, Gen. Secretary, KECSS.

6. **Blood Donation Camp:** on 10th Feb 2024, KECSS organized a blood donation camp at Lal Ded Complex, Pamposh Enclave, New Delhi-110048. This was the first time that KECSS organized such a camp, and it received a great respond. This camp was organized along with Maheshwari club in New Delhi.

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





Shuhul Taaph-2023





Kashmir Fest-2023








KECSS Bureau

Blood Donation Camp



BLOOD DONATION CAMP
By MAHESHWARI CLUB
IN ASSOCIATION WITH
KASHMIR EDUCATION CULTURE SCIENCE SOCIETY
Date: 10th February, 2024
Time: 10.30 am to 4:30 pm
Lal Ded Complex, Pomposh Enclave, G.K.-I,
Opp. G.K.-I, Police Station, New Delhi-110048





Navreh 2023





Abhinavgupta and Book Release



This section, under the name “Community Activity” has been incorporated in Shuhul Taaph to put across the message that the Kashmiri Pandit Community in 1990, after being forcefully tossed and displaced from ancestral land onto torn roads and lanes of life is not a helpless community. The determination of the community that was forced into exodus did not let the miserable situation damp spirits of the community, but it was more determined to win the killing misery. And the section of the community who had earlier migrated from motherland for livelihood came into action with the bond of enthusiasm to do their bit to reach out the displaced section of the community in a purposeful manner. It was not late when the displaced section also stood up along with them to raise social institution, not to let the link with the motherland brake.

I speak to such persons who are in office to run these community institutions to send their activity reports to be part of this section.

This is an activity report, request all, please limit it to that purpose only. We understand every organization is doing nice work and there are people of purpose, who work with a purpose and vision dedicatedly.

The objective of this column is to bring out the overall missionary mode working of community to public. This magazine will be simultaneously a networking link to connect and know about the activities done by different organizations.

Jammu Bureau

Ishwar Ashram Trust (Srinagar) Office off- Ishwar Ashram Trust

Shaivacharya Swami Lakshman Joo (1907-1991) was born in Srinagar, Kashmir and was the most recent and one of the greatest masters in the lineage of saints and masters of the Kashmir Shaiva tradition. His Ashram, located in Ishber, Srinagar, very close to the famous Nishat Bagh on the banks of the Dal Lake, can be easily termed as the ‘Sanctum Santorum’ of Kashmir Shaivism on this planet currently!!

Swami ji’s will had instructed that the main ashram block was to be kept for the use of Smt. Prabha ji for her life time. Smt. Prabha ji was one of the prime disciples of Swami ji. After Smt. Prabha ji handed over the keys to Ishwar Ashram Trust, renovation work was undertaken with an aim to 1) Conduct necessary repairs of the various structures and 2) make it easy for devotees and seekers to have the blessings of the divine at the place where the doyen of Kashmir Shaivism in the 21st century lived and propagated the divine philosophy of Kashmir Shaivism.

The Work related to renovation started around July 2022. After months of repair and other needful works, the main complex building, in which Swami ji

used to live, was formally inaugurated on the auspicious birthday of Gurudev Maharaj which was on Monday, the 17th of April 2023

The effort has been to maintain the originality of the place. However, wooden panels in doors have been replaced by glass panels enabling devotees to view all the sacred areas including Swamiji’s bedroom, his meditation room and the verandah on the upper floor.

Exhibits related to Gurudev Maharaj’s life have been displayed on the ground floor. The lower floor verandah houses a large picture of Gurudev Maharaj, at the very place where he used to sit and meet HIS devotees & visitors during his earthly life.





Ishwar Ashram Trust (Delhi)

IAT remains committed to propagating the philosophy of Kashmir Shaivism, as mandated by Gurudev Maharaj. The inauguration of this complex is another step in this direction.

May Swamiji Maharaj continue to shower his blessings on us all.

The Trust conducted a Workshop on "Limbs of Yoga in Kashmir Shaivism" from 7th to 10th December, 2023 at the Ashram premises in Sarita Vihar, Delhi. The objective of the workshop was to explain "The Limbs of Yoga" from the Shaiva point of view. Over four days the subject was covered in great detail by an eminent faculty which included Dr Ramakant Angiras, Dr Rajneesh Mishra and Dr Nihar Purohit.



As a part of the daily programme, a yoga session in the morning was made a part of the curriculum which was led by two participants, namely, Mr Navkant and Mr Harshvardhan Jhaveri. Thirteen applicants from all over India, including Mumbai, Varanasi, Kolkata and Delhi NCR registered for the workshop.

The inauguration ceremony was held in the morning of 7th December 2023 invoking Gurudev Maharaj's blessings. The morning session comprised of introduction of participants and distribution of the study material to the students by the faculty. The students were also requested to select a topic of their choice, for a presentation to be given by each of them, on the concluding day.

Each day would start with Swamiji's audio lectures. Various aspects covered in the Workshop included Key Definitions in Kashmir Shaivism, Yamas, Niyamas, Asana, Pranayama, Pratyahara, Dharana, Dhyana, Samadhi and Tarka.

The final day began with Gurustuti recitation followed by each participant making a 10 minute presentation on a topic of Kashmir Shaivism. The faculty ranked the participants in order of the merit of their presentations and cash awards were given to the first three ranked participants. M/s Navkant ji, Mohan Mattoo ji and Harshvardhan Jhaveri ji were ranked 1st, 2nd and 3rd respectively. All participants were presented certificates of participation and the faculty were felicitated with shawls/stoles at the concluding ceremony of the workshop.

The feedback received by IAT from the participants was encouraging. Participants urged the organizers to continue such workshops in the future with exclusive sessions for beginners & youngsters.

Universal Shaiva Fellowship, Lakshmanjoo Academy, USA Pilgrimage/Mahasamadhi Retreat 2023

Universal Shaiva Fellowship (USF) / Lakshmanjoo Academy (LJA), based out of the USA organized a 4 Day Retreat (4 - 7 October 2023) on the ancient

teachings of Kashmir Shaivism at Ishwar Ashram premises in Srinagar, Kashmir. This International Event was organized by USF specifically to coincide with this years' Mahasamadhi celebrations on 2 Oct 2023. About 60 participants from across the globe attended the event.



During the retreat, participants studied the Upayas of Kashmir Shaivism, Excerpts from Paramarthasara, Talks on Grace and Practice, practices from Vijnana Bhairava and recitation of Stotras from various Shaiva scriptures. A typical Day would include an early morning one hour Yoga session, under the guidance of Ms Shanna Hughes, followed by a group meditation, morning retreat session, lunch, afternoon retreat session and playing of video excerpts of Swami Lakshmanjoo's lectures on Kashmir Shaivism.

Mr John Hughes, Ms. Denise Hughes and Mr George Barselaar of USF were the main speakers at the retreat. Shri Pran Nath Kaul of Ishwar Ashram, Srinagar also gave participants insights on various aspects of Kashmir Shaivism.

On the concluding day of the retreat, Kashmiri Sufiana bhajan programme was held in the evening for the participants and ashram devotees, which was

thoroughly enjoyed by everyone. (Pictures of the event are on back cover)

Also at the conclusion of the retreat, a felicitation session was organized by Ishwar Ashram, Srinagar to honour Mr John Hughes, Ms. Denise Hughes, Ms Shanna Hughes and Mr George Barselaar along with other esteemed devotees of Swami Lakshman joo. Following the retreat, the participants spent four days visiting various sacred shrines in and around the Kashmir valley.

With the Blessings of Guru Dev, the event was enlightening and blissful for all attendees.

Online / Offline Talks

Ishwar Ashram Trust organised a talk at the Delhi Ashram by Prof. Sthaneshwar Timalisina from the San Diego University, San Diego, California, USA. Prof. Timalisina is a well-known scholar on the subject of Kashmir Shaivism residing in the San Diego area of California and he spoke on "Global Relevance of Kashmir Shaivism in the 21st Century". (See pictures in Centre spread)

Sthaneshwar Timalisina obtained his Master's degree in 1991 from Sampurnananda University in Varanasi, India, and taught for several years at Nepal Sanskrit University, Kathmandu. He completed his PhD from Martin Luther University in Halle, Germany (2005) with a focus on the history of the philosophy of Advaita. His dissertation is published under the title, Seeing and Appearance (Shaker Verlag, 2006). Before joining San Diego State University in 2005, Timalisina taught at the University of California, Santa Barbara, and Washington University in St. Louis. His areas of research include classical Hindu, Buddhist, and Jain literature and philosophies with a specific focus on consciousness studies. His book, Consciousness in Indian Philosophy (Routledge, 2008) is a comparative study of Advaita and Buddhist understandings of the self and consciousness. Timalisina also works in the area of Tantric studies and his recent publications, Tantric Visual Culture: A Cognitive Approach (Routledge, 2015), and Language of Images: Visualization and Meaning in Tantras (Peter Lang, 2015), explore the cognitive and cultural domains of Tantric visualization. Timalisina has published over forty articles, book chapters, and review essays on religion, culture, literature, aesthetics, and philosophy. Timalisina teaches courses on Hindu, Buddhist, and Jain religious, philosophical, and literary traditions, and his teaching interests include 'Religion and Science' as well as 'Yoga Philosophy and Practice.' His current areas of research include theories of mind, with a particular focus on the

cognitive aspects of recognition, memory, imagination, and emotion.

We thank Prof. Timalisina for being with us and enlightening the attendees with his extensive knowledge in the subject

Kashmir Shaiva Institute

National Seminar on Kashmir Shaiva Darshana

A National Seminar on Kashmir Shaiva Darshana was organized by Kashmir Shaiva Institute in association with the Department of Hindi, Vikram University, Ujjain at Vikram University, Ujjain on 03 Nov 2023.

The proceedings started with senior devotees from the Ashram, Smt Vijay Lakshmi and Smt Nirmala Bhan, reciting Guru Vandana followed by inaugural lamp lighting by Hon. Vice chancellor, Vikram University, Prof. Akhilesh Kumar Pandey, Prof. Shalender Kumar Sharma HOD, Hindi Deptt., Vikram University and Trustees of KSI and IAT present. Prof. Akhilesh Kumar Pandey in his inaugural address mentioned that the social change in society is possible through application of the ancient and universal Kashmir Shaivism. About 100 delegates and students attended the Seminar. Prof. CG Vijayakumar Menon VC Maharashi Panini Sanskrit and Vedic University, Ujjain was Chief Guest on the occasion. Prof. Shalender Kumar Sharma HOD, Hindi University, Vikram University, Ujjain as main speaker presented a detailed paper about insights on Kashmir Shaiva philosophy, Shri Devinder Munshi, Trustee KSI briefed the delegates about lineage of Kashmir Shaiva philosophy and contribution of Swami Lakshmanjoo in revival of ancient Kashmir Shaiva Philosophy. Shri RL Bindra presented a paper on Asthagyoga-Eight limbs of Yoga in Kashmir Shaivism. Shri Ashok Dhar, IAT Kolkata also gave brief insights on various aspects of Kashmir Shaiva Philosophy. A Set of Books on Kashmir Shaiva philosophy by Swami Lakshmanjoo was presented to Hon. VC Vikram Univ. Ujjain by Shri Devinder Munshi and Shri Ramesh Kaul. Prof. Jagdish Chandra Sharma, Vikram University conducted the Seminar proceedings. Vote of thanks was given by Prof. Gita Naik, Vikram University at the conclusion of Seminar. A Book stall of Books on Kashmir Shaivism by KSI was well appreciated by delegates and students. A Set of Books for University Central Library was also handed over to Prof. Shalender Sharma by KSI Trustees.

Online / Offline Talks

Kashmir Shaiva Institute organised an on-line talk on the occasion of the birth anniversary of Acharya Kshemraja which this year was on the 27th November,

2023 (per Lunar calendar Karthik Purnima). The talk on the eve of this auspicious day i.e. on 26th November, 2023 was delivered by a renowned scholar from Nepal University, Dr. Madhav Prasad Lamichhane. Dr. Lamichhane spoke on the topic of “दिव्यदेह निर्माण की तान्त्रिक अवधारणा और उस पर आचार्य क्षेमराज की व्याख्या” wherein he dwelt in detail about Acharya Kshemraja's thoughts on various aspects of Kashmir Shaivism. The session was relayed through Zoom to various attendees around the world as well as through the Facebook page of Ishwar Ashram Trust.

Dr. Madhav Prasad Lamichhane is affiliated to Nepal Sanskrit University, Department of Tantra. He has completed his PhD degree from Nepal Sanskrit University focus with Guhyakali adoration. He has deep interest in editing old manuscripts on Tantra. Some of his publications are: Kālikākulapanśāṭaka, Devīdvyaḍhaśatikā, Parātantra, Nirvātantra, Trikaśāstra Rahasya Prakriyā (translated into Nepali from Hindi) etc.

Pilgrimage to Sri Mahakaleswar Jyotirlinga, Ujjain & Sri Omkareshwar Madhya Pradesh

Ishwar Ashram Trust, New Delhi organized a pilgrimage tour for devotees to Sri Mahakaleswar Jyotirlinga and Sri Omkareshwar from 2nd to 7th November 2023. Twenty Devotees were part of this Annual pilgrimage.



At Ujjain the devotees attended the evening Aarti at Ram Ghat, Shipra river where the Mahakumbh is held periodically. They also visited Harsiddhi Mata Temple which is one of the 51 major Shaktipeeths of India; visited the newly constructed Mahakaal

corridor, adjacent to Sri Mahakaleshwar Jyotirlinga and the Triveni Museum.

The group attended one of the most unique and revered rituals at the Mahakaleshwar Temple, Basam Aarti, and also had the darshan of ancient temple dedicated to Lord Kaal Bhairava. The deity of Kaal Bhairava here is said to be the guardian deity of the city of Ujjain. The devotees also paid homage to ancient Mangalnath Temple believed to be the birth place of the planet Mars (Mangal, visited Maharishi Sandipani Ashram and the Gadkalika Temple

The group had darshan of Sri Omkareshwar Jyotirlinga, situated about 140 km south of Ujjain. A special feature of the location of Omkareshwar Temple is that the river Narmada branches into two and forms an island Mandhata or Shivapuri in the center. After paying homage to Sri Omkareshwar devotees also visited Mamaleshwar Jyotirlinga. The ancient name of Mamaleshwar Jyotirlinga is Amareshwar. Both Omkareshwar and Mamaleshwar are the form of the same Jyotirlinga.

On the last day of the tour, Devotees visited Lal Bagh Palace at Indore, which was built by the Holkar dynasty between 1886 and 1921 and also visited the famous Rajwada Palace. They also visited Annapurna Temple which is dedicated to the goddess Annapurna, the deity of food, and is one of the oldest pilgrimage sites in Indore.

The devotees had a blessed tour and enjoyed the bliss of visiting some famous temples & sites.

Kashmir Cultural Trust Organises Two Days Samanbal -2024: A Literary And Cultural Meet, At Jammu - A Report

- Dr. Roop Kishan Bhat

Day one

Jammu based Kashmir cultural Trust a charitable organization working for promotion of national cultural heritage especially of the UT of J&K organized Samanbal 2024 - a two days literary and cultural festival at Saigal hall J&K Academy premises Jammu



on January 9-10th, 2024 in collaboration with Sahitya Academy Delhi and J&K Academy of art, culture languages Jammu. About fifty Kashmiri writers, scholars and cultural personalities from across the country are participating.

The programme started by paying homage to all those writers and cultural personalities who passed away during last one year. Notable among are Rehman Rahi, Omkar Nath Shabnam, Ghulam Nabi Khayal, Mushtak Kak, Shanti Vir Kaul, Asha Zaro etc.

Immediately after this Inaugural session was started. Dr. Roop Krishen Bhat Managing Trustee of KCT and co-ordinator of the programme welcomed all the participants who had come from NCR region of Delhi, Kashmir, Jammu and various other parts of the country. He welcomed all the members associated with various literary organizations of Jammu like Samprati, Nagrad, Vomed, Samoh theatre, Young writers guild etc. to the programme. He welcomed the local media for wider coverage of the programme. He highlighted various important programmes conducted by the Kashmir cultural trust during past two decades and few important publications and digital courses prepared like A course on Kashmiri language now available on Utube and KCT website.

Prof R.L. Shant an eminent scholar Inaugurated the programme. He said that since exile of 1990, when large number of writers and cultural workers were pushed out of Kashmir and got scattered in the country and outside, Kashmir shaivism, Abhinavgupt's scholarship, Kalhanas historical achievement and Lal Ded's literary pursuits guided and helped writers, resettle and reclaim their lost cultural roots. The pan Indian endeavor of the writers has been to conserve and proliferate Kashmiri literature all over the country. Our connect with Kashmir its language and culture needs a rethink on an additional alternative script for Kashmiri. This will help our language to save it for present and future generations. This alternative is Nagri and adopting it by State and Central academies would be a healthy course to which we are committed. But unfortunately the Central bodies and organizations have been overlooking this issue which smacks of nepotism on their behalf.



Samanbal 2024 raises the voice of Kashmiri writers living in the valley, Jammu, Delhi etc. for its rights as equal participants in the pan Indian post 1990 scenario. Kashmiri writers writing in any part of country have equal rights and demand to be considered for all that the State cultural academy and Sahitya academy do, convene and manage.

Kashmiri literay organizations like Samprati, Nagrad and Kashmir cultural Trust be represented in the literary affairs of the Sahitya academy.

Shri Bal Krishan Sanyasi an eminent poet presented the key note address. He emphasized the importance of mother tongue in social bonding and insisted that we need to find different ways to work to preserve our language. Shri Vijay Bakaya former chief secretary of J&K and Ex. MLC who Presided over the inaugural function said that unless we speak Kashmiri in our homes we can not preserve it. He said we need to sensitise the parents to speak Kashmiri with children at home.

Two books 1.Kashmir: nirvasan sahitya edited jointly by Roop Krishen Bhat and M.K Santoshi and a drama book originally by Shakepeare in English and translated into Kashmiri by Gauri Shankar Raina were released on this occasion. Smt. Promila Kaul ably anchored this session.

In the first session two papers on Kashmiri language and literature during last three decades were presented by Shri Kanwal K. Lidhoo and Shri R.L. Jowhar. They brought out important developments of the language and literature during this period. Dr. Sudhir Mahajan eminent theatre personality of Jammu and owner Director of Samoh theatre group based in Jammu gave a detailed account of Drama groups of Kashmir and jammu based in Jammu who have been active for last three decades. He delvd in detail the current scenario of theatre and drama in J&K. The session was jointly presided by Prof. R.L. Talashi and Prof. Farooq Fayaz former professors of university of Kashmir. They spoke about various presentations of the session and hailed them.

Next session on “Mother tongue ,social bonding, literature and culture :current scenario was

moderated by Shri Arvind Shah author and translator and presided over by Shri Aseer Kishtwari”an eminent scholar . Opening the discussion Mr. Shah mentioned that Kashmiri Pandits got scattered across the globe after forced exodus of 1990 and preserving their language and culture in diaspora has been a big challenge. He highlighted several measures taken by certain NGO’s and individuals like AIKS, JKVM, KCT, Samprati, Nagrad etc in preserving the mother tongue and underlined several points which may help in the endeavor to preserve the language. He invited participants from audience to express their views on this subject. Those who spoke include

Mr. Aseer Kishtwari highlighted the importance of preservation of mother tongue and appreciated Kashmir cultural trust for organizing such important programmes.

The session four of the day was short story readings in Kashmiri. The session was presided by Prof R.L. Shant an eminent short story writer himself. Those who presented their short stories are Shri. Makhan Lal Pandita Shri Avtar Hugami, Dr Gaurishankar Raina, Shri Rinku Koul and, Engineer Vinod The audience appreciated all the stories with different themes and contents. Prof Shant offered his comments on the stories and appreciated the writers.

The delegates of the day included some eminent names like SarvShri. A K Naaz, Hasrat Gadda, B N Betab, Piare Hatash, P N Trisal, Afaq Aziz, Nisar Nadeem, Dildar Mohan, Satish Koul Safeer, Ashok Dhar Gawhar, Tej Sagar, Rajinder Agosh, Dr. Tej K Moza, Zaman Azurda, Smt. Santosh Nadaan, Nancy Chetna, Ashok Koul, Ramesh Razdan, Ramesh Nirash, J L Raina, Maharaj Krishen, etc.

Day two

A National seminar on Life and works of Prof Omark Koul a world famous Linguist, and eminent scholar and thinker was organized by Kashmir Cultural Trust as part of samanbal 2024 in the J&K academy premises on 10th January, 2024. The first session was jointly presided by Prof PN Trisal a Jammu based eminent scholar and Prof Ashok Koul a Professor at Brown university Providence USA. Dr. Roop Krishen

Bhat Managing trustee Kashmir cultural trust and coordinator of seminar welcomed the guests, audience and the family members of Prof Koul to this seminar. He described in detail the persona of Prof. Koul. His contribution to Linguistics in general and Kashmiri Linguistics in particular, to Peoples Linguistic survey of India PLSI etc.

The paper on contribution of Omkar Koul to Linguistics in general was presented by Prof. Aejaaz Sheikh a professor of the Department of Linguistics, University of Kashmir. He elaborated on his contribution to Linguistics in general and said that Omkar Koul has published more than thirty books and more than two hundred research papers. He has collaborated with world famous Linguists like Peter Hook, Braj Kachroo, Kashi Wali, Ruth Laila Shadmith, Ludmilla Zakharin etc.. Next paper was presented by Prof. Rattan Talashi an ex professor of Kashmir University. He spoke on Omkar Koul's work regarding Dardistan and Kashmir and said he was the second scholar after Grierson who worked on this subject. Prof Afaq Aziz another scholar from University of Kashmir spoke about his life, his education and his autographical work. He said Koul was a multifaceted personality whose contribution to Kashmiri Language and Linguistics is unparalleled. He presented a poetical tribute to Omkar Koul which was appreciated by all. Mr Nisar Nadeem presented a review of Omkar Koul's short stories and said the convass of his works was global. Thereafter Prof PN Trisal presented his presidential remarks. While speaking he mentioned that Prof Koul was his most humble student and a honest researcher. It is a strange feeling to speak about him and pay tributes to ones dear student who is no more. He appreciated the papers presented by all speakers of the session.

In the second session which was presided by Sh Tej K Rawal a former broadcaster and poet and Sh. Hasrat Gadda a scholar of repute. In this session Prof. Veena Gupta a former professor head of Dogri of Jammu University spoke about Koul's contribution to Dogri and Punjabi languages and his association with Jammu University. Others who spoke about him were Mr. Ali Shaida, Mr. Amin Bhat the presidents of Adbi markaz Maraz and Adbi markaz Kamraz of the valley of Kashmir, Prof. Shad Ramzan, Prof Farooq Fayaz, Mr. Aseer Kishtwari and host of other delegates.

In the post lunch a mono -acting presentation was given by a young and popular artiste Mr. Anil Chingari which was appreciated by all. A Kashmiri Mushiara in which about 25 poets from the entire UT of J&K participated was a highlight of the programme. Very eminent poets like RL Jowhar, Ak Naz, Dildar

Mohan, Ali Shiada, Shad Ramzan, Afaq aziz, BK Sanyasi, Santosh Nadaan, Kusum Dhar, Nancy Chetna, Aseer Kishtwari, Piare hatash, Nisar Nadeem, Satish Safer, Engineer Vinod etc. participated. It was the largest Mushiara held in Jammu in recent times. Ms. Deba Nazeer the youngest short story writer of Valley presented her short story.

The seminar ended with a resolution by delegates from valley that next such seminar on Omkar Koul the proud son of Kashmir shall be held in the Valley in coming summer. At the end Prof. Roop Krishen Bhat Managing Trustee Kashmir cultural trust and coordinator of seminar thanked all the participants and stake holders like J&K Academy of art culture and Languages and Sahitya Academy for their support.

*A report by Dr. Roop Krishen Bhat Managing Trustee and coordinator of the programme
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Jammu Kashmir Vichar Manch 2023 at a Glance

- Dileep Mattoo

1. Sammohik Shivratri Mahotsava- 26th February 2023, Sunday was organised at Sathya Sai Auditorium, Lodhi Road, New Delhi. The function was presided over by Sh. Ashish Baiya Ji, a social worker. The programme constituted of a cultural programme, rituals and felicitating the prominent Kashmiri pandits in the following Categories-
a) Shauraya Samman: b) Award for literature; c) Award for Outstanding community service d) Institutional contribution for upliftment of the community; e) Outstanding nationalistic contribution.
2. Gaash Tarukh edition X—a musical competition of youngsters in various age groups was organised globally on 06th August 2023 at Hindi Bhawan, New Delhi. The grand finale function was presided over by Sh. S.M.Sahay, IPS and Major General Ramesh Kumar Raina, SM.
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.
4. Third M.K.Kaw Memorial lecture was organised on 28th October 2023 at Ekattm Bhawan, 37, Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhiyay Marg, ITO, New Delhi. The prominent speakers at the occasion were Dr. Amitabh Mattoo Ex V.C. Kashmir University, Dr. Shashi Bala, a renowned Indologist



from Bhartiya Vidya Bhawan and Col. Tej Tickoo. Some eminent community members also spoke on the occasion.

5. Prayas, an attempt to bring the KP think tank on a common platform. Informal discussions were initiated among the prominent community members to reach a consensus on the future course of action of the community. The meetings were organised across NCR at Pamposh Enclave, Noida, Gurugram and Shalimar Garden.
6. JKVM in association with AIKS, GKPD and KECSS organised a dialogue on the political developments in Jammu and Kashmir on 30.07.2023 at J.N.Kaul memorial Hall.
7. Batta Loot Day was organised on 13th July 2023 at Kashyap Rishi Bhawan, Noida.
8. Community Screening of Documentary on Abhinavgupta produced by Shri Suraj Raina.

Vyeth Screens Documentary on Bal Krishan Sanyasi



Vyeth a socio cultural organization on November 2 released and screened a documentary on Pt. Bal Krishan Sanyasi, a versatile Kashmiri poet and an author at the writer's club auditorium in Abhinav theatre, Jammu.

Pt. Sanyasi who seems to have been highly inspired by Pt. Dina Nath Nadim rendered his poetry ranging from revolutionary to romanticism and then back to pathos. His way of expressing the poems

delivered in the film kept the audience spellbound. All his poems made the viewers nostalgic may that be related to the people who suffered due to extremism in the valley during 1990's or may that be spiritual poems or may that be related to the beauty of our home-land.

The film was fully acclaimed and by galaxy of intellectuals present in the hall. The event was chaired by Prof (Dr) R.L.Shant as the chief guest and Prof. R.L. Talashi and Sh. Aseer Kishtewari as the guests of honor. Sh. Vijay Bakaya, Swami Kumar Ji, Sh. Kuldeep Khoda, Dr. Kailash Mehra, Prof. B.L. Zutshi, Sh. Upinder Nath Raina and Dr. Deepali Wattel were prominently seen sitting among the other dignitaries in the theatre.

The program started with lighting of the traditional lamp by the guests and Sarwasati Vandhana recited by Rudrika and Rohini, students of Gandhi Memorial College. This was followed by songs sung by Naina Sapruo Trisal supported by Dr. Ramesh Nirrash and team of professional musicians.

In the welcome note Prof. Virender Rawal, the Founder President Vyeth apprised the audience with the activities of Vyeth. "Vyeth is a voluntary organization and has been contributing to the society by way of making documentaries of the icons of the community for past two decades without any financial assistance by any government or non-government organizations. He said". He further said that the documentaries produced by Vyeth are concept based and is genuinely produced, preserved and propagated



for the poster-ty

Subsequently the welcome note was followed by formal screening of the film by Prof RL Shant who was accompanied by Prof. Rawal.

Later the event continued with award cere- mony where in the guests honored Naina Saproo Trisal and Dr.Ramesh Nirrash for excellent musi- cal performance, Sh.Ramesh Marhatha for incredible film hosting and the students of Mass Com. and B.Com (H) Gandhi Memorial College, Jammu led by Ayaz Nishat and Amaad (Students) under the overall supervision of Sh. Pradeep Pandita and Ms. Akansha (Faculty) for their excellent stage management.

In his brief address Prof R1 shant impressed upon the audience that such documentaries shall genuinely prove to be a milestone for research work for the students of history and creative art. While appreciating the sincere contribution by Vyeth towards the preservation of the works of our icons, he said that people should come for- ward to encourage this organization so that more and more is being produced in future.

In his brief speech Swami Kumar Ji applaud- ed the contribution of Vyeth in documenting the works of the legends like Sanyasi Ji.

Prof. R.L. Talashi and Sh. Aseer Kishtewari were of the opinion that the poetry written and recited by Pt. Sanyasi in the film was speechless. Appreciating Vyeth for its voluntary contribution towards the community they further added that the contribution of Vyeth is undoubtedly highly skillful, professional and unique and therefore need to be recognized by one and all.

The event was coordinated by Muskan kaul and Anirudh Madoch the students of Deptt. of Mass Communication, Gandhi Memorial College, Jammu and its live streaming attracted approximately 5K viewers across the globe.

Vote of thanks was proposed by Prof. Virender Rawal

We Reach Out to Needy Beyond Our Community

- Ravinder Mahaldar

Founder Patron SACHEL THE MATAMAL.

After the displacement from the valley each individual in general and social activists in particular lost no time to attend the multiple problems faced by the displaced community, children were the special area for me right from the valley. I started free coaching to children living at Muthi Camp. Created a small space for children where they could study, learn different activities and could express their feelings. The place was named SACHEL THE MATAMAL. The mission



Free coaching classes Art workshop at SACHEL THE MATAMAL



Cultural Activities of Children



Children from juggi clusters encouraged to go to school.

continued for few years. Unfortunately the whole Muthi camp was shifted to jagti town ship and the space created remained empty for sometime. It was Mata Sharika's blessings, we let open this space for free coaching to street children and children living in juggi clusters. It proved to be a blessing for these children, we are happy to see these children doing extremely well in education and other co curricular activities for me it has become my life mission. This is a very small initiative that keeps me busy and gives me a chance to teach and learn many things. This is my personal initiative and I manage it from my own resources. We are neither aided nor accepting any donations or help from any agency or individual. Yes some young volunteers sometimes spend some time with these children and teach these children free and keep on going. Orzu.

Shri Amar Nath Vatika Vasundhara - A Brief Introduction

- Satish Kaul & Shadi Lal Raina

Situated in sector 15 Vasundhara, Ghaziabad Shri Amar Nath Vatika Vasundhara is the pious place of Lord Shiva and he has himself chosen this place of worship for the benefit of our community. It was a dream come true when Lord Shiva came and we saw he himself virajman here at this place in the present position and form. The fact of the matter is that without his consent and without his blessings it was an impossible task for the displaced community to have such a beautiful and peaceful place of worship and also the most vibrant centre for all type of social activities. A good number of Shiv Bhakts from the valley of Kashmir who came to be settled in this colony known as Vasundhara are the most blessed lot to have the blessings of Shri Amar Nath with them here in their vicinity. Nearly one hundred families of our community are residing here in Vasundhara and Amar Nath Vatika is the place of our dearest deity lord Shiva and is the common place of our community for various social, cultural and religious activities. The tall, beautiful and very attractive lord Shiva Lingham is the main source of attraction not only for our community members but for the general hindu population of this area. A good number of Shiv Bhakts are regular and punctual in their duties to have Darshan of Lord Shiva on daily basis. A big prayer hall facing Shiv Lingham is the centre of all such type of social, cultural and religious activities. A huge lawn with green grass and beautiful trees with green cover adds and rather multiplies the beauty of this place. Hundreds of visitors/ participants on special occasions can come and be seated there and enjoy the

beauty of nature and the blessings of Lord Shiva.

Koshur Samaj Samiti Vasundhara is the duly elected and registered organization of our community members which has the responsibility to manage and maintain the affairs of this premises. For the last nearly two decades this Samiti is regularly organizing annual maha yagya in this very premises on the eve of maha shivratri for jagat kalyan and also for peace, progress, prosperity and well being of our community. Since our main deity here is lord shiva and that is the reason, we perform the annual maha yagya annually on saturday to sunday preceding maha shiv ratri just to kick start the celebrations and festivities related with our main festival of maha shiv ratri. Annual maha yagya is no less than any social festival of our community here in Vasundhara because each and every family with all family members duly participate in this yagya physically and financially as well. Every one here feels and believes that it is his own mah yagya and acts and participates with the same feelings. In order to ensure that every one is able to participate the organizers while deciding the dates on saturday and sunday take special care that Hawan dates are planned in such a way, so that no one is left behind due to any valid reason such as clash of dates due to marriages etc. Our top most priority is and should be that our own community members are the most important ones and their participation is the most valuable contribution and asset. This year the annual hawan was performed on 10th & 11th february, 2024 and a gathering of more than 400 people including our own members residing in Vasundhara and other biradari members from the adjoining areas participated.

A properly and permanently built Hawan kund is duly in place where the maha yagya is performed every year. It is an ideal place for performing various ceremonies like hawan, yagya, yagnopavet, kah nether, dev gone, kagan, sunder kand, katha etc. The basic infrastructure for performing such ceremonies are now properly in place. Any help to make it more convenient and comfortable is readily extended by the managing committee to all such members who want to avail the services. Tent and catering Services (with kashmiri cuisine) are also readily available for this location on reasonable rates. Pandit ji with adequate know how is also readily available for any such services.

In addition to the all basic facilities required for a functions mentioned above, very recently a two room accommodation with kitchen and wash room facility has been newly built in this walled and gated premises. It is a great facility for arranging and organizing small and modest functions of social and

religious nature. The safety and security concerns have been duly taken care of as the whole premises is now under CCTV surveillance.

Another most important facility that is made available here is the availability of mritu samagri and the deep freezer facility for cold storage of dead bodies. Since our community is scattered globally and now some of the dead bodies need considerable waiting period for cremation and deep freezer is one of the essential requirements for such persons. With deep freezer facility being made available at Amar Nath Vatika round the clock any needy person can avail of this facility. This facility is open to members of our community not only from Vasundhara but from all adjoining areas such as Vaishali, Indrapuram, Ram Prastha, Shalimar Garden, Partap Vihar, Ghaziabad and/or your friends and relatives at reasonable distance as well. The members of our community from Vasundhara can recommend this facility to their known persons who are in need of such facility. It is a great social service if we share such type of information with our acquaintances at the time when they are in need of this facility. It is a big help that you can extend to your known needy persons.

Koshur Samaj Samiti Vasundhara has recently decided and already started weekly Kar Seva programme. This Kar Seva is done on every Sunday for one hour from 11.00 am to 12.00 noon. Latest Kar Seva was done on last Sunday on 3.3.2024. The main focus of the Kar Seva is the cleanliness and routine maintenance of the Amar Nath Vatika premises. The start of the Kar Seva was done with suchhata Abhiyan and it will be expanded with many other activities to enable more and more members to assemble and interact with each other. The present team of Koshur Samaj Samiti believes that regular interaction and maximum participation of our community members is the key to success of all our policies and programmes for community welfare. So, everything possible will be done to encourage and ensure more

and more of our community members come forward and feel involved.

Last but not the least is the wholehearted and equal participation of our female members that is our Matre Shakti. In this regard our latest and ladies special get together was held on last Sunday i.e. On 3rd March, 2024, to celebrate Dhyar Daham Festival. A good number of our female members participated and while celebrating this occasion a packet of salt, one coin and one pair of Athur as per our tradition was distributed amongst all the female participants. A cup of Kashmiri Kehwa was also served hot. We look forward to celebrate each and every festival collectively but the real celebration is when each and every family of Vasundhara with all members will come, join and enjoy the festivals collectively. Let us hope and pray that this dream will come true sooner than later.



annual hawan performed on 10th & 11th february, 2024 in which more than 400 people were present



Ladies get together on the occasion of Dhyar Daham celebrated on 3rd March, 2024

EXECUTIVE MEMBERS OF KOSHUR SAMAJ VASUNDHARA

OFFICE BEARERS

S. No.	Name	Sector	Mobile No.
1.	Mr. Rajesh Pandita (President)	6	9212272245
2.	Mr. Shadi Lal Raina (General Secretary)	15	9910038376
3.	Mr. Kuldeep Raina (Treasurer)	13	8826909009



SHIVA

Incarnate to Enlighten the People

Abhinavagupta was one of the most outstanding Acharyas of the Shaiva philosophy. We learn from references about him in *Tantraloka* and *Paratrimshika Vivarana* that he lived in Kashmir about the end of the tenth and the beginning of eleventh centuries A.D. The earliest ancestor of Abhinavagupta was a famous Brahmin, Attrigupta, who lived in Autarvedi, the ancient name of tract of land lying between the Ganga and the Yamuna. Attrigupta, a great Shaiva teacher, was invited by King Lalitaditya, who ruled over Kashmir from 700-736 A.D. A spacious house was soon built by the orders of the king on the banks of the Jhelum (Vitasta) for Attrigupta and a big Jagir was granted to him for his maintenance. Many generations after him, one of his descendants, named Varahagupta, became a great scholar of Shaiva philosophy. His son, Narasimhagupta, alias Chukhala, father of Abhinavagupta, was also a great Shaiva teacher.

Kashmir Shaivism

Abhinavagupta was a great scholar and Shaiva teacher, who possessed knowledge in all matters relating to Kashmir Shaivism. The versatility of this genius was recognised in his own time. He was one of the best authorities on Shaiva philosophy and various branches of Sanskrit literature. The great Acharya sat at the feet of many teachers for the traditional and



authoritative knowledge. Such was his humility and devotion that these teachers imparted to him all the learning they possessed. The celebrated author of Kavya Prakash, Rajanaka Mammatta calls him the Shankaracharya of Kashmir.

Yogic Powers

There are eight great Yogic powers explained in Shastras as follows:

- ❖ The first is the superhuman power of becoming as small as an atom;
- ❖ The second is the Yogic power of increasing the size of one's own body at will;
- ❖ The third is the supernatural power of assuming excessive lightness at will;
- ❖ The fourth is the superhuman power of obtaining anything desired;
- ❖ The fifth is the Yogic power of attaining irresistible will;
- ❖ The sixth is the superhuman power of commanding the whole world;
- ❖ The seventh Yogic power is to fascinate the whole universe; and
- ❖ The eighth is to possess unrestrained will viz. whatever he wills comes true.

All these eight Yogic powers were possessed by Acharya Abhinavagupta. In Malinivijayotara Shastra six great signs of spiritual advancement are explained as follows:

The Six Signs

(1) Unswerving devotional attachment to Shiva; (2) Full attainment of Mantra Siddhi; (3) Attainment of controlling power over all the five elements; (4) Capacity to accomplish the desired end; (5) Mastery over the whole science of rhetorics and poetics; and (6) The sudden dawning of the knowledge of all the Shastras.

These six great spiritual signs also were observed by discerning people in Abhinavagupta and in his time everybody looked upon him as Shiva incarnate.

Kashmir Shaivism is called Trika philosophy. Trika means threefold science of man and his world. This Trika contains the science of (individual), (the energy) and (the universal). The purpose of Trika is to show how an individual rises to the state of universal through energy. Abhinavagupta classifies the Trika philosophy in four systems, which are Spanda system, Krama system, Kula system and Pratyabijnya system.

Explaining the Spanda system, Abhinavagupta says that it is that movement which actually is no movement. Spanda makes us realise that whatever is in movement actually is established in unmoved point. So although everything seems moving actually it

is not moving at all.

Abhinavagupta says that Krama deals with space and time. He explains that actually there is no space. When one deals with forms, the space appears. When one is established in formless state of being, for him there is no space. In the same way when there is something to be done, then only the existence of time shines and when you have nothing to do, then time has no existence.

Science of Totality

As for the Kula system, he says that Kula means the Science of Totality. In each and every part of the universe totality shines - throughout. Take a small part of any object. In that part you will see the universal energy existing.

The Pratyabijnya system deals with the school of recognition. Abhinavagupta, while explaining this school of recognition, says;

To make it clear, at the time of God-realization nothing new is realised; on the contrary, the Yogi feels that this state of God-consciousness which he was experiencing was already known to him.

In this school of recognition, Abhinavagupta says, the state of God-consciousness is already there. He comes to the conclusion that in this universe you have to see and realise the Kingdom of God- consciousness only everywhere and nothing else.

Many works have been attributed to Abhinavagupta though only a few are extant. Some of the works of his authorship are:-

(1) Bhairavastotra; (2) Malinivijaya Vartika (3) Bharata Natya Shastra-Tika; (4) Dwanmalokalochna; (5) Natyalochana; (6) Purva-Panchika; (7) Gitarthasangraha; (8) Bodha Pancha Dashika; (9) Paramartha Charcha; (10) Dehastha Devatachakrastotra; (11) Paratrimshike Vivarana; (12) Paratrimshika Lagu Vitti; (13) Kramastotra; (14) Ishwara Pratyabijnya-Vimarshini; (15) Ishwar Pratyabijnya Vivriti Vimarshini; (16) Paramartha Sara; (17) Tantraloka; (18) Tantra Sara, etc. Besides these, he wrote many other works. Madhuraja, a devotee of Abhinavagupta, writes that:

Lord Shree-Kantha-Nath Shiva Himself appeared in Kashmir in the form of Abhinavagupta to enlighten the people. Madhuraja also asserts that Abhinavagupta was, in fact, the incarnation of Bhairava-Nath Shiva. In conclusion I would say that Abhinavagupta was the pride of Kashmir. He is even now the pride of Kashmir, as his works and teachings continue to deeply influence the discerning people.

www.ishwarashramtrust.com
www.kashmirshaivainstitute.org



Bhagawaan Gopinath Ji

A SAINT FOR THE GENERAL MASSES

Bhagawaan Gopinath Ji, the greatest and divine saint who lived in Kashmir all his life (July 1898 AD – May 1968 AD), hardly needs an introduction. He was an exalted soul, a Jivanmukta, as he was called, who had chosen to take birth in a simple Kashmiri Brahman family.

As the years progressed and by his own intense sadhana, which was performed with iron will and determined efforts, he raised his own spiritual state to such a level that his contemporary saints and other enlightened persons and devotees addressed him as “Bhagawaan”.

“Bab” meaning “Father” was the name by which Bhagawaan Ji was addressed by the common Kashmiri Brahmin folk during his lifetime. He was loved and respected by all those who had the good fortune of obtaining his darshana and also by those who heard about him. He would help all those who had a request for his help – whether their request was verbal or was transmitted through their antarmann.

After Bhagawaanji left his mortal frame in 1968, the first Ashram was constructed at Kharyar, Srinagar on the banks of the river Jhelum. Devotees would throng the ashram, daily, in huge numbers to have darshana of Bhagawaanji’s beautiful and lifelike Murti and perform Aarti.

Later on, after the mass migration of the Kashmiri Pandit community in 1990 to other parts of the country, Bhagawaan Gopinath Ji Trust constructed Ashrams at various places also. At present, Bhagawaanji’s ashrams are located in Jammu, Delhi, Pune, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Vaishali, Mumbai. Devotees are organizing prayer meetings at various cities in other countries as well.

Some Major Activities of the Trust

❖ One of the important objectives of the Ashrams is helping the needy persons. Ashrams are



providing monetary aid to needy families on monthly basis. Financial assistance is also provided to persons needing medical aid (One time Lumpsum amount) and educational aid.

❖ During the period of Corona pandemic, Ashrams were actively involved in the helping the needy persons and families in providing medical equipments – portable oxygen cylinders / portable oxygen generators etc. Food packets were hygienically prepared and distributed to the needy persons.

- ❖ Further, the Trust is also distributing wedding materials for girls of financially weaker sections of the society.
- ❖ Blankets and other warm clothings are provided to needy persons during the cold winter season. The Trust also provides financial assistance to NGO's which are involved in helping the needy persons of the society.
- ❖ The medical mission of the Trust also holds various medical camps (Ortho / Dental / Heart / Eye camps / in the Jammu Ashram premises and at other locations at Jammu, like Jagti, Roop Nagar, Nagrota etc, wherein specialist doctors are invited for consultation of patients.
- ❖ The Trust carries out various socio-cultural activities on various festivals. Weekly and Monthly Homas are one of the regular activities.
- ❖ Hyur Ashtami is celebrated at all the Ashrams and night long Bhajan Keertan is performed by various artists. Zang trai is another function

when atgath / Noon is given to ladies. Daily Magh Maas Pooja is performed during the full Magh month. Similarly, daily Pooja is performed during the Navratras. A special Pooja was also carried out at all the Ashram's on the occasion of Lord Ram's Pran Pratishtha function at Ayodhya.

- ❖ The Trust also organizes Geetaji recitation / debates / Painting competition etc among children of various age groups and distributes prizes in these categories.
- ❖ All Ashrams celebrate the annual Mahayagnya and Mahajayanti celebrations with great fervor and lots of devotees attend the functions. Sadhus are also invited on Mahajayanti and prasaad and dakshina is offered to them.

The tradition of "help to the needy" is being kept as a priority at all the different Ashrams and all possible help is provided.

Bhagawaanji Bless All.

Lall Ded (Grierson)

Vakh 106

Kashmiri text

**Aami pane sadres navi tches laman
Kati boze dai mati deyee tar
Aaman takan poan zan shram
Juv tchum barman gare gatchaa**

Translation

I tow my boat with raw rove thread
Through the ocean, righteous way to head
Oh the Almighty, implore! May You heed
Get me to cross – get me across
The raw unbaked platters of clay, I am
My Nectar like water seeps to leave me dry
Am restless in turmoil beat
Keen temptations to reach Home: Sweet.

© ***Arvind Shah***



Uma Kant Kachru

Mata Roopa Bhawani

**The Woman who Unshackled
from the Social Norm and Attained Parabhairav!**



History is as old as when it began to be documented and thus has its recorded influence. On the other hand, folklore and mythology have no time stamp, yet they have a formidable influence on our socio-cultural lives. Kashmir has had a unique distinction of having an equitable contribution from women from time immemorial in social and spiritual development of the society. Folklore tells us that in the beginning of Kalyug, when the Bhairav Tantras and

Kashmir Shaivism were lost, Lord Shiva appeared on Kailash Parbat as Srikanthanath and taught Rishi Durvasa the theory of Bhairav Tantra. To dissipate the thought, Rishi Durvasa created mind born children, one of whom was a woman who was named Ardhatryambaka (Source: Kashmir Shaivism – Secret Supreme by Swami Lakshman Joo). There is also a parallel to the Śāivīc path that of Śāktīc that follows the practice that is Śaktī centric in the form worship of

Kālī who initiates the seeker through Her twelve forms of Power, in succession called Kramastotra of Siddhanātha which is Śāktic/ Tantric spiritual lineage and is believed to have been established towards the end of the 7th Century CE by Śivānandnātha who was the head of a Tantric sub-center (upapīṭhadeśa) known as the Uttarapīṭha. Interestingly, he is supposed have imparted this esoteric knowledge to three female ascetics, namely Keyūravati, Madaṇikā and Kalyāṇikā. (Source: The Kramastotra of Siddhanātha or The Hymn on Time as a Process by Pt. Moti Lal Pandit). Thus, from the ancient times, woman has been on an equal pedestal with the man in every aspect of social and spiritual life in Kashmir. It is, thus, no surprise that we have Laleshwari and Roop Bhawani as the mystic saints who have emerged on the scene of spiritual pursuits in no less measure as the male saints.

The subject of this essay is about Alakh Ishwari Mataa Roop Bhawani. Much has been written about her as the mystic saint. I will, therefore, refrain from repeating this aspect. It is important for us to reflect on her another side of life which is her feminine persona.

Being influenced by the practices of Trika Darshan, popularly called Kashmir Shaivism, Kashmir saw an equitable role from men and women without any subservience. This has been a formidable influencing factor in shaping the socio-cultural system of the society. This, perhaps, is the reason for many women spiritual saints considerably impacting the social ethos of the Hindu society in Kashmir. Two most important names that had resounding influence were Laleshwari or Lal Ded in the 14th century and Alakh Ishwari Mata Roopa Bhawani in the 17th century. Both were Shaivite saints. Having lived three centuries apart, there are striking differences in the ways they propagated and influenced the followers of their times. While in Lal Ded's time, the Muslim influence had impacted the society through, both soft and violent conversion to Islam, freedom of expression was relatively easy. Her thought process influenced across the sects. Added to that, Lal Ded's Vaakhs were in the common Kashmiri language that became popular amongst both, Hindus and Muslims. Her influence spread thin and wide.

However, situation three hundred years later in the 17th century was completely changed in the valley. The socio-cultural scenario was far different from that of Lal Ded's time. The Hindu Brahmins had systematically been suppressed through multiple genocides, mass killings, forced conversions, destruction of their sacred temples and scriptures,



reducing the community to a humiliated lot. The social fabric was predominantly Islamic with Kashmiri Hindus having become a weak, suppressed miniscule minority. They practiced their faith with low profile. Besides, the Islamic fanaticism, terror and torment had caged the, once open, society into orthodoxy. This, particularly, took a toll on the women. Child marriage, deprivation from education and male dominance relegated her to home chore and child bearing. Intellectual pursuit, that once was an equal opportunity to her, got buried under the slogging home chore.

In this social milieu was born a baby girl, Roopa, in the family of a spiritually elevated Brahman, Madhav Joo Dhar who lived in down town, Khankah-e-Sokta, Safakadal in Srinagar. There are variations in the dates quoted by different writers about the year of her birth. It ranges from 1621 to 1625 CE. Little is known about her early childhood except that she was attracted towards the spiritual practices her pious father was engaged in. She was graced with Śaktipaath and showed the ascetic tendencies at an early age.

However, the innings of love, care and fondling of parents was short-lived as she was married and sent off to the difficult terrains of in-laws at the tender age of seven. It is here that the life of Roopa Bhawani takes a major turn. The intellectual incompatibility and the patriarchal social system led to harassment from the in-laws, forcing her to take the unheard-of step in those days. Despite taboos, Roopa Bhawani demonstrated the courage to unshackle herself from the restrictions of the social system of that time and boldly walked out of the marriage. In this, she was whole-heartedly supported by her father who welcomed her back. This incident talks volumes about the family's progressive outlook despite unfavourable social conditions.

Being a woman of substance with spiritual leanings, Roopa Bhawani took little time to get initiated into the study and practice of Trika Darshan under the guardianship of her father, Madhav Dhar. He very early realised that she was on the path of sainthood and guided her to her destination. Soon she left the warmth of her parental abode and wandered from place-to-place practicing, meditating and preaching for long stretches of time. Having acquired the rich knowledge of Sanskrit, facilitated her study of the Shaiva scriptures. The divine enlightenment fountained forth into poetic expressions in her and, like Lal Ded, she started preaching through her vaakhs. Unlike Lal Ded, the times had advanced to the

extent that Roopa Bhawani's poetic outpourings were in manuscript form and hence got preserved and compiled as Rahasyopadesa which is a collection of 146 vaakhs. Roopa Bhawani acknowledges in this vaakh that Lal Ded and her father are her first Gurus:

*"I have placed my teachers, Lal and Madhav
In my cleansed, purified mind
Reduced to nothing, I have become
The Supreme Self, a part of Brahma"*

(Excerpted from the book – The Mystic and The Lyric by Neerja Mattoo)

In her long life which spans almost a century, Roopa Bhawani was a wanderer. She didn't stay at one place. She demonstrated healing powers, of which there are many household stories. For instance, the story of the well at Vaskur shrine dug by a blind devotee on her command got him his eye sight on completion of the task. Her wanderings and the temporary abodes became places of pilgrimage for her devotees. Vaskur, Manigam, Lar, Chashme Sahibi and her birth place at Safakadal, Srinagar are the shrines visited even today by her devotees. Her day of Nirvaan is observed as Sahibi Saptami, twice a year. One on Magh Krishna Paksh Saptami in the winter and the other in Pitra Paksh. Roopa Bhawani's life is an example of a woman who defied odds, broke social clutches and followed her intuition to attain the state of Parabhairav in her lifetime.



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Dr Raj Nehru

Ancestral Brilliance of Kashmir

Pratibignya Shastra and Modern Psychology

Almost two decades back, while working for IBM, I had the opportunity of travelling to Singapore and getting certified on Herman Brain Dominance Instrument, popularly known as HBDI. Eventually I became the certified trainer in the year 2005. As a certified HBDI trainer, I had the privilege of training and guiding more than 5000 individuals on their journey of self-awareness. I found HBDI as an amazing research based psychometric instrument used to assess human preferences that deepens one's self-awareness. HBDI is based on the empirical research of the renowned brain scientist, Dr Roger Sperry, who gave the world split brain theory of Left and Right Brain, that says each side or hemisphere of our brain has its job to complete.

This research was taken up further by Ned Hermann, who translated this split-brain theory into Hermann Brain Dominance Instrument (HBDI) Model. His research is based on understanding the preferences of the left and right brain. The research has found that the Right brain is more empathetic and intuitive while the Left brain is about analytical and structured preferences of an individual. Perhaps, some of us would have noticed many times an ironic phenomenon where often we find some individuals exhibiting remarkable sharpness in certain situations but astonishingly clumsy in other. For example, when I was working at IBM, I recall that we had a highly skilled software engineer working for a leading tech client. In his role, he excelled in writing complex code, debugging software, and problem-solving within the structured environment of programming. His left-brain dominance was evident in his ability to analyse algorithms, identify logical errors, and streamline workflows efficiently. However, when he was tasked with brainstorming creative solutions for user interface design or conceptualizing innovative



software features, he would always find himself struggling. His right brain tendencies, such as creativity and intuition, were less pronounced, leading to difficulties in envisioning novel solutions beyond the realm of structured programming. This apparent contradiction finds its roots in the differential dominance of the left and right brain hemispheres.

Perhaps HBDI has gained an immense popularity in last few decades and is used by individuals, organizations and corporations for helping people to enhance their self-awareness and facilitate resolution of the problems related to communication, problem-solving, team work, strategy building, growth, innovation, negotiation and personal growth. The area of self-awareness has also gained a significant movement in last few years since it is believed that higher levels of awareness is a panacea to many human problems be it personal or professional. While I have been a practitioner of Self Awareness myself, and by virtue of my expertise developed as an HBDI Coach I was attracted to read more research in this

field. It happened some months back when I developed interest in reading and understanding Pratibignya Shastra of Kashmir where I uncovered interesting similarities between HBDI and Pratibignya that provoked me to explore the relationship between brain and conscious experience and deeper self-awareness. I noticed that Brain experiences and conscious awareness approaches seem to be correlated

In my exploration of Pratibignya, many amazing realities got unfolded. Pratibignya, which is an essential part of Kashmiri Shaivism and an essential pillar of Trikha Philosophy, has been propounded by Acharya Somananda and later developed by Acharya Utpaldeva, Acharya Abhinavgupta and Acharya Khemraj. Pratibignya philosophy primarily delves into questions surrounding understanding of consciousness, self-awareness, and the nature of reality.

Pratibignya can be understood as the fundamental belief or assumption one holds about their identity, purpose, and potential. It is the conscious awareness of one's thoughts, emotions, beliefs, and actions, as well as the recognition of the interconnectedness between oneself and the surrounding world. Pratibignya encourages individuals to examine their core beliefs, values, and perceptions about themselves and their existence. It prompts introspective inquiries such as "Who am I?" and "What do I believe about myself and the world around me?" By critically evaluating these initial propositions, individuals become deeply aware of themselves and gain insights into their self-perception, uncover limiting beliefs or biases, and explore avenues for growth and transformation. In practical terms, defining Pratibignya in the context of self-awareness and consciousness involves fostering mindfulness, introspection, and self-inquiry practices. Pratibignya further elaborates the concepts of Prakasha (illumination) and Vimarsha (reflection) that sheds light on the nature of consciousness and the process of self-awareness. Prakasha represents the inherent luminosity of the mind—the pure awareness that illuminates our thoughts and experiences. Vimarsha, on the other hand, symbolizes the reflective nature of consciousness—the dynamic interplay of perception and reflection that gives rise to our sense of self and the world around us.

Shiva and Shakti are further seen as two inseparable dimensions of consciousness in Kashmir Shaivism that further resonate with Prakash and Vimarsh as advocated in Pratibignya. Shiva symbolizes the unchanging, eternal source of

consciousness and stability within the individual while Shakti embodies dynamic creative power, the force that brings about transformation, expression, and innovation. The harmonious union of Shiva and Shakti leads to a holistic existence, balancing stability and dynamism. In fact, on a closer examination, I feel that there appears to be a further interconnectedness of Shiva - Shakti concept with Ardhnateshwar, Ida - Pingala and Left Brain and Right Brain. Perhaps, that requires further research and I will not delve into that here.

However, my quest for deeper understanding of our timeless wisdom of Kashmir Shaivism and its interconnectedness with contemporary philosophies including HBDI has significantly increased. There is a dire need to study the nature of consciousness and self-awareness and their dynamic interplay of light and reflection within mind and draw parallels between these ancient concepts and the modern framework of the HBDI model. While integrating these perspectives, I have uncovered interesting similarities between left and right brain with Prakasha and Vimarsha. Both have the reference towards the individuals understanding and journey of self-discovery and transformation.

For example, Prakasha corresponds to the functions associated with the right brain hemisphere, which is often considered holistic, intuitive, and creative. The right brain is involved in processing visual-spatial information, creativity, intuition, and holistic perception. It is responsible for tasks such as artistic expression, pattern recognition, and emotional processing. Prakasha reflects the inner illumination and self-awareness, similar to the holistic and intuitive processing of information associated with the right brain. On the other hand, Vimarsha corresponds to the functions associated with the left-brain hemisphere, which is often considered analytical, logical, and focused on detail-oriented tasks. The left brain is involved in processing language, logic, reasoning, and sequential thinking. It is responsible for tasks such as analytical problem-solving, mathematical calculations, and verbal communication. Vimarsha encompasses the perception and engagement with the external world, similar to the structured and analytical processing of information associated with the left brain.

Perhaps I am aware that there is a fundamental difference between eastern and western psychology. Contemporary Psychology of west believes that the Mind is the problem while as eastern philosophy, especially Pratibignya is of a strong opinion that "Mann" and "Buddhi" are not the true instruments to

understand the world. Just like "chitta vritti nirodha" from the Yoga Sutras,

which refers to the cessation of the fluctuations of the mind like "Svarupa-sunyam Iva Samadhih" that points to a state of realization where the individual transcends the fluctuations of the mind and recognizes their true nature or essence (Svarupa). This state of Samadhi in Pratibignya philosophy involves a profound recognition of the self as pure consciousness, beyond the limitations of individual identity and mental modifications.

In fact my detailed examination of the research paper titled "Concept of Manifestation Process in Kashmir Shaivism" published by aboriginals Mudasar Ahmad Tantray, Tariq Rafeeq and Ifrah Akhter, whose paper, "Concept of Manifestation Process in Kashmir Shaivism" have explained the concept of manifestation process in Kashmir Shaivism from Shiva tattva to Prithvi tattva and their transcendental and immanent predicates (Prakrti and Purusa). Their paper has also shown that the ultimate reality, Paramshiva, manifests itself into various forms which likely represent the theory of causation.

Donald Hoffman, America's leading cognitive psychologist, is of the view that consciousness is more fundamental than the objects and patterns perceived by consciousness. We have conscious experiences because consciousness is posited as a fundamental aspect of reality. His views on consciousness bear some similarities to the concepts found in Pratibignya and Kashmir Shaivism. Hoffman's work also explores the idea that different conscious agents may perceive reality differently based on their perceptual capacities and evolutionary imperatives. This notion aligns with the understanding in Pratibignya philosophy that individual consciousnesses perceive and construct reality uniquely based on their karmic patterns (Samskaras) and mental dispositions. Hence self-awareness of HBDI need to transcend the mind and thought in order to reach ultimate awareness

While I will continue with my research efforts on this topic, I strongly feel there are profound possibilities of bridging the insights of modern neuroscience with the timeless wisdom of ancient philosophy that can empower ourselves to unlock the full potential of the mind and awaken the infinite possibilities that lie within us. In the convergence of these two worlds—the ancient wisdom of Kashmir Shaivism and the modern insights of the HBDI model, there seems to be a great opportunity to know about the nature of the mind and consciousness. It is a journey of discovery that transcends the limitations of language and culture, inviting all who dare to embark

on a quest for truth, wisdom, and self-awareness.

The intersection of HBDI & contemporary psychology with Kashmir Shaivism is indeed an amazing find that will help the modern-day thinkers to connect with ancient Shaivist philosophy of Kashmir. Any research on the similarities and synergies between ancient Pratibignya. philosophy and the left brain-right brain model would also be an interesting interdisciplinary study combining neuroscience, psychology, philosophy, and perhaps other fields.

The integration of Pratibignya. philosophy with contemporary psychological frameworks such as the Herrmann Brain Dominance Instrument (HBDI) could indeed offer valuable insights and a sense of pride for Kashmiris and those interested in the rich intellectual heritage of Kashmir.

For Kashmiris, recognizing the deep philosophical roots of Pratibignya. in their cultural heritage can instil a sense of pride and connection to their intellectual legacy. By highlighting the parallels between ancient Kashmiri wisdom and modern psychological theories, every Kashmiri can celebrate the enduring relevance and sophistication of their cultural heritage in shaping contemporary thought.

Overall, integrating Pratibignya Kashmir Shaivism with modern science and psychology has the potential to enrich both fields and offer new insights into the nature of mind, consciousness, and human experience. By embracing an interdisciplinary approach, researchers can bridge the gap between Eastern and Western knowledge systems and foster greater understanding and collaboration across diverse cultural and philosophical traditions.

In conclusion, the exploration and showcasing of Pratibignya philosophy present a remarkable opportunity for India to assert the advanced thinking of our revered rishis and scholars. By delving into this profound ancient wisdom, we illuminate the timeless brilliance that has long characterized our cultural heritage. Moreover, in today's globalized world, the West stands to benefit greatly from the insights and perspectives offered by Eastern wisdom. Through the integration of Pratibignya philosophy into contemporary discourse, India can not only reclaim its intellectual legacy but also foster cross-cultural dialogue and mutual enrichment. As we continue to delve deeper into the depths of Pratibignya, let us embrace the richness of our heritage and forge a path toward a more enlightened future, where the wisdom of the East and West converge harmoniously for the betterment of all humanity.

Vice Chancellor, Shri Vishwakarma Skill University



Ashok Kaul

Retired Emeritus Professor of Sociology Banaras Hindu University

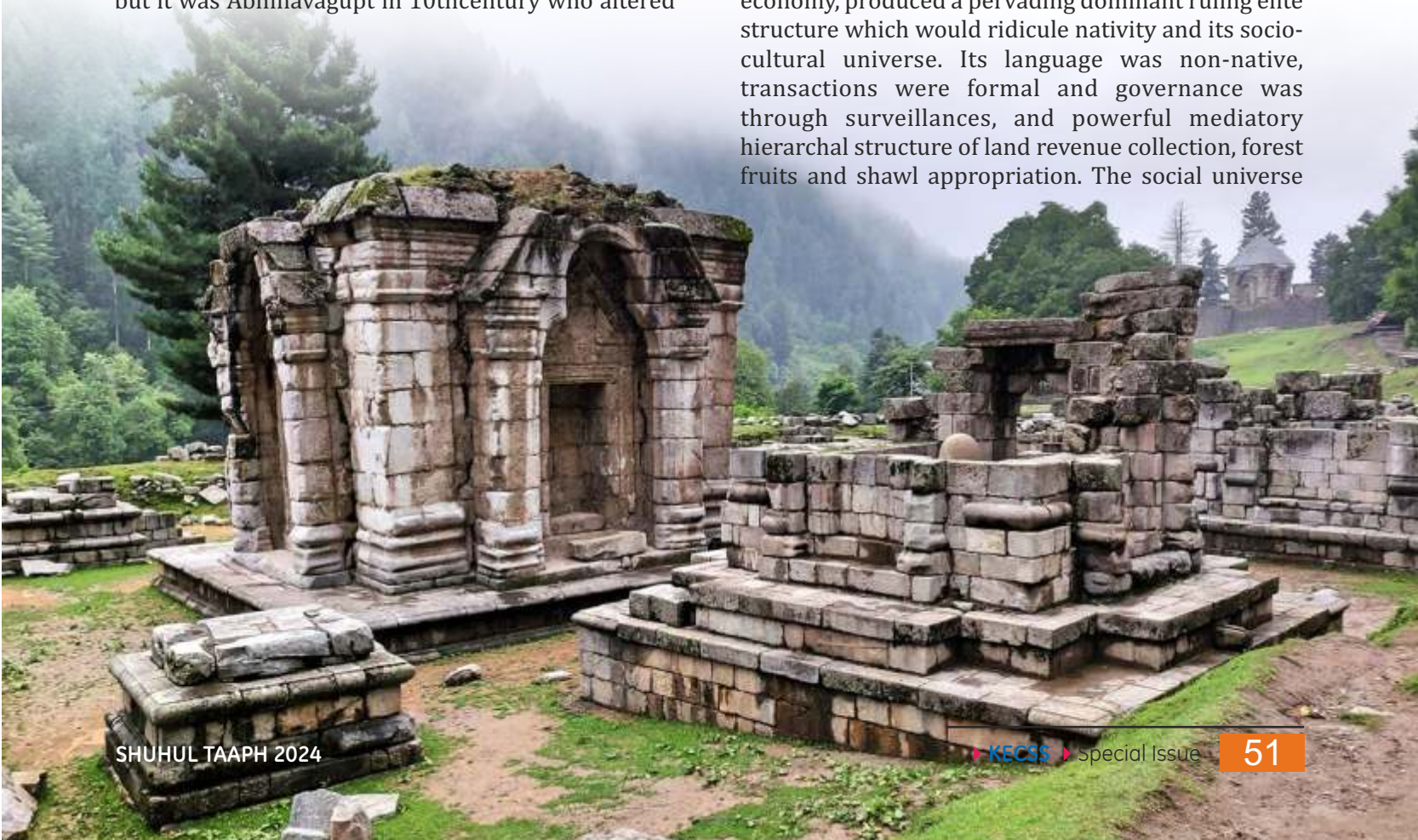
OUR HISTORICAL MEMORY

Deconstructing the Moral Edifice

The encounter with any opposite tradition produces twin roads; a road dominated by dominant tradition and the other accommodative, blending in continuity. These are short wave and long wave transformations in history. Kashmir has a unique history of appearance and disappearance of traditions with the change of order making; what are left in historical memory are the traces that glue the times and make historical memory un-ruptured. The connecting traditions of Kashmir have been the gluing philosophies that are identified with the agency, which have changed the structures. Shankaracharya might have won debates with Buddhism in Kashmir; but it was Abhinavagupta in 10th century who altered

the direction of the tradition. The actual disappearance of Indian Buddhist Tantra happened many centuries after the death of Shankaracharya. The beginning of powerful Kashmiri Shaivism and then Islamic influences after 13th century possibly made the structural changes to a society that was powerfully blended later by Lal Ded in the middle of 14th century. Subsequently, Nund Rishi provided it a plank of Rishi order.

Kashmir, after 14th century, passed from non-native monarchies of one faith to another until its accession with Indian nation-state in 1947. During these centuries the social formations, from its political economy, produced a pervading dominant ruling elite structure which would ridicule nativity and its socio-cultural universe. Its language was non-native, transactions were formal and governance was through surveillances, and powerful mediatory hierarchal structure of land revenue collection, forest fruits and shawl appropriation. The social universe



had developed its sub-structures that could endure this exploitative system and at the same time would retain the spiritual strength for its historical journeying. We had turned, from the same genealogical pool, into two distinct communities, Bata and Musalmans, after conversions. There were two opposite modes of worship with different allied festivals, despite our lived religion having been shaped by the Rishi order that had preserved our common moral universe. Trika philosophy produced by Lalla became its guiding principle that would go well with its peasantry social universe, in language, and also it had its powerful episteme linking the philosophy with its nativity repertoire. Bata–Muslman dichotomy were blended in this common universe of Rishi order, originated by Nund Rishi. The blending was internalized in the realm of moral conduct while subtle differentiations would be marked but essences were akin. The dress and food preferences were similar but modes of preparation had its intricacies. The knowledge realm was intact; the modes of religious worship were different. The insider-outsider subjectivities were similar, but linguistic variations were subtle. Sacred geographies were common, but social geography was discernable. The collective world view of moral realm was similar, but its justification could be subjective. Despite the fact that non-native rulers, from time to time, tried to dislocate the epistemological realm by producing alternate tradition of formalism, it failed to change the moral world view subjectivity of multitudes. Other than making symbolic changes in the language of religiosity discourses, social and ethical blending of both the traditions at micro level did not break.

What monarchies could not alter for centuries, the manufactured referent from 1960s, with complicit local political elite, destroyed the social universe. It was gradually fractured and finally dismantled by unleashing of terrorism in 1990s when Pandits were driven out, when Bata became Kashmiri pandits and Musalmans turned Kashmiri Muslims.

The credit should go to the present political dispensation that we are able to review the holistic narratives and are not only left to decipher the exclusive stories. What we have gained and what we have lost might be subject to general interpretations. A section of Muslims in the valley have gained positions in the government services, abandoned by the pandits, as well as from the non-movable assets of pandits, like lands and houses to a substantial measure. Pandits outside the valley have grown due to employability of their children and overall materiality, to an unbelievable extent. Kashmiri Muslims are well



spread all over the world and so are Kashmiri Pandits. Despite cultural syncretism, claims both live in distinct religious realms of diaspora, quite active in their ambition of retaking their distinctness.

What is lost then? It is the naturalness of our social universe. This social universe was compression of time, space and language of subaltern in different eras of the monarchy, producing a moral universe of symbolism and metaphors. It was the lived tradition of common existence that had been dismantled. The three constituents essential to its continuity were people place and language. It stands fractured. Therefore its replica outside the valley is not a substitution for the original in the perfect measure. Inside the valley, homes without the essence of Trika are houses devoid of moral universe. Non-native traditions cannot blend the moral internalization though it can make you a religious professional. Similarly, the cultural reproduction outside the valley may look real, but its being cannot be as unsullied as it used to be in the valley. The lost social universe had two intrinsic ingredients, known as sociological fact (Durkheim). One was moral power of familiarity; known as 'lihaz' and the second was exteriority of persona, elderliness recognized as 'zechhar'. These two intrinsic moral ingredients would cut across all manmade distinctions of caste, class, religion, rank, and generation gaps. This is lost. The fundamental living principles of our moral edifice have been robbed by militancy and displacement. This has caused disintegration in the families, loss of warmth in the relationships, disempowerment of elderly people in their homes and most importantly loss of conversations. Could we bring it back? That needs real intellectual exploration.



Prof. Satyabhama Razdan

Kaśmīrasabdāmrtam

An Introduction

कश्मीरशब्दामृतम् - संक्षिप्त परिचय

Language as medium of expression is integral and intrinsic to human personality. It embodies the creative and evolutionary nature of civilization. Without language human beings would be just another, though higher, forms of biological beings. Language is also the most manifest and pronounced element of individual and collective identity. It is shaped by the societal factors and, in turn, exercises an abiding influence on societies, communities and nations. One of the defining characteristics of a nation or a civilization is language

Grammar is a framework within which the language is written and spoken. Therefore, centrality of grammar to language is undeniable. This is equally true of Kashmiri language regardless of the fact that there has been an occasional and uninformed debate about its origin. The fundamental and scientific determinant of the origin and evolution of a language is its morphological and syntactic structure. On the touchstone of these parameters Kashmiri undoubtedly owes its inheritance to the Indo-Aryan languages although it has been significantly enriched by the word stock of Persio-Arabic Origin.

Considering the importance of grammar for a language it is necessary and long overdue to accord due recognition and treatment to Kaśmīrasabdāmrtam of Īśvar Kaul, a work of great importance in its own right. It has manifold distinctions which entitle it to a detailed critical study. It is the first and the only grammar of Kashmiri language written in Sanskrit about two centuries ago. It has followed the pattern of Pāṇini, the greatest grammarian of all times. Uniqueness of

Kaśmīrasabdāmrtam also lies in the fact that it is written in the *sūtra śailī*.

This article is based on a single hand written Manuscript of Kashmīrasabdāmrtam written by Īśvar Kaul in the 19th century A.D. The said manuscript comprising ten chapters spread over 422 pages is written in the Devanāgarī script. This monumental work presents a detailed description of the grammatical structure of Kashmiri including its Phonology and Morphology. The fact of having been written in Sanskrit has restricted its access to the non Sanskrit knowing scholars in the state and elsewhere. It is, therefore, need of the hour to bring this monumental work into the public domain not only to make it accessible to the scholars and researchers but also to facilitate the language needs of the scholars of historical and structural linguistics.

Īśvar Kaul commences this *magnum opus* with the inventory of Kashmiri speech sounds which constitutes the introductory chapter of the work. According to him, the Kashmiri alphabet consists of two types of letters, viz., *Prasiddh varṇa* and *Aprasiddha varṇa*.

It is noteworthy that the vocabulary followed in Kaśmīrasabdāmrtam has a Sanskritized orientation and is specific to a particular socio-cultural and religious section of society. The words used as illustrations are usually shown as ending in *-u*. The propensity of the author to shift *-u-* from the medial position of the word to the final position indicates his insufficient understanding of the phonological structure of the Kashmiri word stock. Many words

used in Kaśmīraśabdāmṛtam do not exist in Kashmiri, written or spoken in the valley. Quite a few words have been incorporated, though distortedly, from Persio-Arabic stock. For example the word *mait-un* in the sense 'lifelessness' (4/65 manuscript P. 106) does not exist in Kashmiri. However, the Persio-Arabic word *mayyat* is most commonly used for a 'dead body' by the Muslim speakers of the valley.

The study of the manuscript is replete with statements which lead to inevitable conclusions that Īśvar Kaul was probably not a speaker of Kashmiri language spoken in the valley of Kashmir. His mother tongue could have been any of the dialects of Kashmiri spoken in the Kashtwar-Doda region discernibly influenced by the Pahari dialects of Jammu region. This is corroborated by the author's statements and above all his Hindi translation of these statements like पच्चयन छुह गरान (फट्टियों को गढता है manuscript P. 13) काछन छुह फुटरान (सागों की लकड़ियों को तोड़ता है manuscript P. 13), माजि हन्ज कोरि (माईकियां कुडियां manuscript P. 26), मालि सुन्द नेचुव (पिव का पुत्र manuscript P. 26), माजि हुन्द मोल (माई का पिव manuscript P. 27), गोव हन्ज वछ्छ (गउ की बच्छी manuscript P. 27), नागचि नारिज्य (चश्मेकियां नलियां manuscript P. 28), ड्यकुक् रत (मत्थे का लहू manuscript P. 29), कृपारामज बेजि (कृपारामकियां भैनां manuscript P. 29) and so on.

Further, the addition of *-Īath* after *-ith* (परिथ क्यथ, करिथ क्यथ, दा'रिथ क्यथ, ख्यथ क्यथ manuscript P. 366-67) is neither found in use in the present day Kashmiri spoken in the valley of Kashmir nor is it seen employed in the literary masterpieces of Lalla Ded, Nund Rishi, Mahjoor or any other, past or present, poet or prose writer of the Kashmiri Language. The fact is that *-ith* followed by *-Īath* is actually used by the Kashmiri speakers of Kashtwar and its adjoining areas. This fact not only strengthens the inference that Īśvar Kaul might have not been a Kashmiri speaker of the Kashmir valley but also calls into question the correctness of the assumption of Dr. Sushila Sar that Īśvar Kaul hailed from Aalikadal, Srinagar in support of which she has not cited any credible evidence, written or otherwise.

There is no page numbering in the manuscript while as chapter and sub-chapter numbers are indicated at the end of the chapter and the sub-chapter. Each chapter as well as sub-chapter is concluded with these words: "इति श्री शारदाक्षेत्रभाषा व्याकरणे कश्मीरशब्दामृते-प्रक्रिया समाप्ता meaning 'here ends the description of the chapter (titled---) in Kaśmīraśabdāmṛtam, the grammar of language of śrī śāradā region'.



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TODAY IT IS SOMEONE ELSE, TOMORROW IT CAN BE ME



Ashwani Kumar Chrungoo
Social Activist and Columnist

NAICHPATER

The History of Kashmir Civilization (Saptrishi Samvat-5100)

A significant development in the Civilizational flow of Kashmir awaits us all. On the auspicious occasion of the coming Navreh (New year or Nav-Varsh Pratipada) this year on 9th April 2024, the "Saptrishi Samvat" will complete five thousand and one hundred years of its existence. It is an extraordinary event so far as our civilization in Kashmir valley is concerned. 'Saptrishi Samvat' is a living evidence of the Civilization of Kashmir and its continuity for the last more than five thousand and one hundred years. The best part of it is that even after five thousand and one hundred years, the 'Saptrishi Samvat' is a working and living entity and we observe its existence among us every year.

There are a number of old alamnacs in the world.

In this context, the oldest alamnacs are Egyptian, Assyrian, Babylonian, Hindu, Chinese and Mesoamerican etc. In whole of Bharatvarsha, the Yugabd calender is the oldest. It was established 26 years ahead of 'Saptrishi Samvat'. We are currently observing Yugabd Samvat-5125; thus the 'Saptrishi Samvat' is a contemporary alamnac not only to the Yugabd calender but is also contemporary to the other oldest alamnacs in the world.

The great thing about these two oldest alamnacs in India is that they are functional and working till date while most of the other such oldest calenders in the world have ceased to be functional and working alamnacs. Both the 'Yugabd Samvat' and the 'Saptrishi Samvat' are based upon lunisolar system of



astronomical calculations where both solar and lunar years are recognised as complementary and supplementary to each other. The beauty lies in the fact that this profound knowledge of India has stood the test of time and is considered completely scientific and functional.

'Saptrishi Samvat' is an indigenous almanac of Kashmir. This Samvat in Kashmir which is completing 5100 years this year is a testimony of the historical fact that Kashmir's civilization had a distinct and great character. This civilization contributed as the fountainhead of ancient Vedic civilization and culture. There are four important pillars of the Civilization of Kashmir ie, the ancient art & architecture in the Kashmir valley, written monumental compendium of the last thousands of years, the working and functional cultural traditions of Kashmir and the 'Saptrishi Samvat'.

The continuity of the oldest Samvat known as the 'Saptrishi Samvat' is an evidence of our history, belonging and living in Kashmir as the indigenous people of Kashmir. That the Kashmiri Pandits (Hindus of Kashmir) are the original inhabitants of Kashmir is also established by our esteemed almanac called 'Saptrishi Samvat' which completed five millennium, ninety nine years ago. It needs now to be celebrated on the completion of 5,100 years by all who believe in the truth that they are a part and parcel of the profound civilization of Kashmir.

The legend says that the Saptrishis (seven sages) assembled on the Hari-Parbat in Srinagar-Kashmir in the ancient times and after a great thought, they initiated the new almanac, Saptrishi-Samvat, dedicated to them, for the valley of Kashmir. These sages, as per Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, were: Vishwamitra, Jamadagni, Gautama, Vashishtha, Kashyapa, Bharadwaja and Atri. There is a particular place earmarked around the periphery of the Hari-Parbat called, "Sata-Resh" (Saptrishi) which remains a special point of reverence for the devotees visiting Hari Parbat temple of goddess Sharika for the last thousands of years.

Kashmiri Pandits and the Kashmiri Muslims both are fundamentally, and also in principle, the sole inheritors of the civilizational ethos and legacy of Kashmir. The Kashmiri Pandits always feel pride in declaring their direct connect with their thousands of years heritage in Kashmir. This they have continued practically even in their forced exile for the last thirty five years in the most graceful manner. Despite their pain of exile, the Kashmiri Pandits kept observing the birthday of their river in Kashmir, the Vitasta-Jhelum, every year. They continued with their tradition of

publishing the yearly almanacs in the shape of "Panchangs" and the Jyotshi family of Bijbihara-Kashmir deserves a great acknowledgement in this regard. Walter R Lawrence in his book, 'The Valley of Kashmir' describes beautifully the high reverence of the people of Kashmir towards the springs, rivers, rocks, mountains and natural resources of Kashmir.

However, the majority community in Kashmir, due to certain religio-political considerations, was misdirected to shun its own civilizational connect and heritage dating back to the last more than five thousand years. Here is now the occasion for them to reassess and reconsider their notion about the whole issue under discussion. The greatest quest for the human beings on this earth, anywhere and everywhere, both individually and collectively, has been their search for their roots. Howsoever healthy, wealthy, wise and influential one may be, but the intimate connection with one's own Civilization is the most important soothing treasure and happiness for both the individual and the society. Moreover, history didn't begin just 700 years ago in Kashmir.

The great thinkers and ideologues in India evolved the idea of almanac and calendar on the basis of their knowledge about the scientific issues commensurate with their vast experiences of life. 'Kaal-Ganana' or time-calculation in India was considered as a very serious subject and brilliant minds were devoted to such issues from the times immemorial. They would take into account the position of stars, planets and their natural satellites very closely so that its impact on the life of the human beings on earth could be made better and ideal. This scientific thinking gave birth to the organised almanacs-calendars in India, the mention of which can be found even in the ancient books of great value like Vedas, Upanishads, Ramayana, Mahabharata and Puranas. Neelmatapurana is the oldest indigenous "Purana" of Kashmir.

The conceptualization of year, months, weeks, seasons and important occasions of geographical and astronomical events were the most important part of these almanacs. For example, it was perceived that in the Indian conditions, there were/are six seasons in a year called-"Shadharitu". These six seasons are Vasant (Spring), Greesham (Summer-hot season), Varsha-Ritu (Rainy season), Sharad (Pre-Autumn), Hemant (Autumn) and Shishir (Winter). Each season consists of two months and in total comprised the twelve months of a year.

Keeping in view the local conditions of the Kashmir valley, the thinking minds in Kashmir also adopted this concept of 'Shadharitu'. However, in

practice in Kashmir, there were/are only five seasons. All these five seasons have appropriate Kashmiri names derived originally from the above mentioned Sanskrit names. The first three seasons consist of two months each while the last two seasons consist of three months each. These names are the echo-names of the original names. 'Vasant' is called 'Sonth', 'Greesham' is called 'Garmi' (it was also called as Grishem some six or seven decades earlier) and 'Varsharitu' is called 'Vehraat'. 'Sharad' and 'Hemant' are amalgamated into one season and is called 'Harud' (Ha+Rad) and lastly 'Shishir' is called 'Shisher-maas'.

While there are several other witnesses to prove that the Civilization of Kashmir dates back to 7,000-8,000 years BCE, the 'Saptrishi Samvat' is a functional and living witness to confirm this fact. It is important that the current and future generations, particularly belonging to Kashmir, know about these issues of our collective concern; thus inspiring them to establish and flourish their connect with their glorious civilization. This will also further inspire them to do more meaningful research in this regard. It is suggested, in this connection, that:

1. A grand community programme may be organised in this context well before the commencement of Navreh this year,

2. A year long celebration may be organised throughout the length and breadth of the country wherever there are institutions and presence of the people belonging to the Kashmir valley,
3. In foreign countries as well, these celebrations may be organised by involving our institutions working therein,
4. Schools, colleges and universities may be requested to organise seminars, symposiums and other such programmes throughout the year, as per their convenience,
5. The government can be requested to issue a special postal stamp in this regard and the ministry of culture and sports can be asked to organise programmes in this context as well.

Besides what has been said above, in order to inculcate the sense of civilizational connect, old history books written by Kashmiris themselves should be provided a shelf-space in maximum homes during this year. Document-books like, Neelmatapurana, Rajtarangini/s by Kalhana (researched by Aurel Stein), Jonaraja, Shrivar, Pragyabhatha, Shuka, Tareekh-e-Hassan, The Kashmiri Pandit by Pt. Anand Koul and also (in addition) The Valley of Kashmir by Walter R Lawrence deserve our immediate and meaningful attention.

Lall Ded (Grierson)

Vakh 98

Kashmiri text

**Aayes vatay gayes ne vathae
Suman sothe manz lusum doh
Chanda vutchum tae haar ne atay
Navitaras dimae kiya bho**

Translation

Came in blessed from a divine way
Did not go pious, to be on a pious way
Midway, the bright day got into dark night
Unable to cross the bridge, am in pitiable plight,
Searched pockets to find a penny, handy
But am in penury, possess no money
What shall I pay in cost
To the boatman to take me across.

© Arvind Shah



M. H. Zaffar

IDENTITY

My mother was an illiterate Kashmiri woman, but she remembered many a vakhas of Lal- Ded and many a shrukh of Nund Reshi, which she used to recite to me when I was a child. She used to tell me the story of Lal- Ded and how she made the newly born “Nund” to suck her apparently dried breast. This was the kind of education I got from my illiterate mother and this gave me my identity. I am a Kashmiri Muslim, but also an heir not only to Lal-Ded and Nund Reshi, but also to many other Rishis like Abhinavagupta, Somanand, Vasugapa and Kashup rishi. The very name Nund Reshi connects me with five thousand years of my history. But our present education system in which there is no place for our mother tongue has changed the situation altogether. The graduates, professional

or otherwise we are producing year after year are totally rootless and know next to nothing about their linguistic, cultural and spiritual identity. They are strangers to their own mother tongue. So, there is a crisis of identity. In a short story entitled “the stranger-beside-me” written by Hirday Koul Bharti this question of identity appears as a scorpion before us. Here the identity of a person and of a collectivity is conferred by an external authority, and on arbitrary grounds. But identity can be conferred only on those who either have no identity or else are not conscious of their identity, the story reads:

“A proclamation was made: from now onwards any person having a mole on any part of his body or limb would not belong to our fraternity he could not be “us”.





The absence of a mole alone would be our identification, the mark of our true breed, the stamp of our authenticity. Stealthily I covered the mole on my cheek with my palm. But the stranger-beside-me, as though to console me, said “don't worry brother, come with me. There is a cure for everything.”

The narrator is taken by the stranger-beside-him to a team of “Indescribably clever practitioners of miraculous cures” who examined the mole thoroughly and conducted various tests time and again and then:

'Eventually the head of the team of specialists addressed me, “no, my friend, it cannot be done. The mole cannot be carved out.”

“But why?” I begged.

“Because its roots go very deep inside you. They are in your blood, in your inherent nature, your cultivated traits, your very genes, generation upon past generation.” he went on. “Any attempt to remove it will change your complexion, your whole being, the very imprint of your face will be lost. You will be reduced to a shadow, why, a mere phantom.”

After being disappointed with the 'practitioners of miraculous cures,' the stranger-beside-him takes the narrator to a Godman, “who lives beyond the bounds of our reason” and whose abode is said to be the cremation ground. The story goes on:

'I was brought before this great man. He looked at me and then glanced at the stranger-beside-me. Lifting his eyes to the heavens and scrutinizing them for a while, he turned to me, “when the day comes for him to need my attention, don't you let him down. You are the one who should bring him here,” saying this he put his hands inside his sack and drew out a dark, black as death scorpion, immobile under his spell.

“This is the cure for your affliction,” he said, while the scorpion rested on his palm.

“But what kind of cure is this?”

“This is the only cure”. With these words he lifted the scorpion and placed its two poisonous pincers upon the mole on my cheek. He broke the spell and the scorpion came alive. It began with tentatively probing the size of the mole, paused for a while and then swelled its poison sacs, drawing forth all the venom in its tail, steadied its fangs on the mole and shot it. It stung and

stung, again and again. I don't know how many times. I fainted. When consciousness returned, the mole was gone, but the poison, it ran through my veins, filled my blood, saturating the very root of my being. My body was suffused with pure venom but I was happy in the knowledge that the pain, no matter how agonizing, was all hidden inside me, from my appearance no one could cast any doubt on my breed, identity or authenticity-I conformed perfectly.'

After some time, the authority to determine the identity is again invoked. And the story goes on:

'As soon as he arrived, he rejected the old method of determining true breed through descent into a cauldron of milk, just as he had on that earlier occasion. The only difference was that, this time the proclamation was: “from now onwards this is our identification: anyone who does not have a mole on his body will not belong to our fraternity. He will not be “us”. This alone will determine our identity, our authenticity, our true breed”.

This time it was the turn of the narrator to take the stranger-beside-him to the holy man as per the directions of the holy man himself. The story concludes:

'Once again the holy man drew out the spell bound scorpion from the sack, broke the spell and placing it on his cheek, said to me, “I was afraid you would let him down. The cure for his affliction is the same”. Just as before, the scorpion stung the same spot on his cheek again and again. The stranger-beside-me fell unconscious just as I had. When he regained consciousness there was a round, black spot where the scorpion had stung him, exactly like a mole.

In his case too the poison had spread through his veins, suffusing his whole being, but like me he too was happy in the knowledge that the pain, no matter how agonizing, was well within him. From his appearance no one could doubt his breed or authenticity. Afterwards, he went his way and I mine. But he and I remain similar in one respect. There is venom in him and there is venom in me.'

The question of identity is important in itself, but still more important is the criterion of identity, the standard by which the identity is determined.



T.N.Dhar 'Kundan'

Kashmir Culture in Turmoil

Kashmir is undergoing an unprecedented turmoil for more than three decades now. It is time that we should be sitting back and reflecting on the rich and unique culture of Kashmir, the land of our birth. T.S.Eliot has defined culture as 'the way of life of a particular people living together in one place; that which makes life worth living; that which makes it a society – it includes Arts, Manners, Religion and Ideas.' After the mid twentieth century culture has come to mean the affirmation of a specific identity – national, ethnic, regional rather than the transcendence of it. All these definitions make culture overlap civilization. In order to differentiate between the two, we can safely say that culture is the way we think and civilization the way we live. The former has a definite and telling effect on the latter and the two

together give us our distinct identity. In effect culture of a society manifests itself in the shape of its civilization.

If there is a single terminology that sums up the entire gamut of our culture as Kashmiris, it is the name '*Ryeshi Vaer*' given to our land. '*Ryeshi Vaer*' literally means a garden of sages. This land has produced an innumerable number of saints and savants, sages and Sufis, who have always stood for the durable principles of truth, freedom, wisdom, humility, simplicity, compassion, contemplation, worship and the like. The common Kashmiri has adopted these qualities and infused them in his thinking and actions. If I borrow the idiom of Mary Pat Fisher I would say that the map of our Kashmir couldn't be colour-coded as to its Hindu, Muslim, Buddhist identity; each of its



parts is marbled with the colours and textures of the whole. We have had Buddhist view of life and cosmos thrive in this land for many many years in the past. We have had a distinct non-dualistic ideology called the 'Trika' Philosophy shape the metaphysical thinking of this land. We have had the Vedic rituals of the Sanatana Dharma as the basis of our very existence. There used to be an admixture of 'Shakta' and 'Tantra' in our way of worshipping and then, with the advent of Islam in fourteenth century we witnessed the Sufi order in this land. All these in course of time got merged and produced a blend of cultures, which is humanistic, pious and pure, yet very simple and straightforward. It has taught us to turn from the fragmentary to the 'total', from the superficial to the profound, and from the mundane material to the spiritual. Religion has never been an obstacle to this unique cultural blend.

Professor Timothy Miller, a specialist in new religious movements, has rightly observed that, 'Human culture is always evolving and reinventing its own past and present.' We call our way of life 'Sanatana Dharma' or the Eternal Law of Do's and Don'ts of life. Our belief is that God, Universe and the Vedas are eternal and co-existent. Strict adherence to the prescribed norms ensures cosmic harmony, order in the society and the welfare of mankind. Due to this belief Hindus, the original inhabitants of this land, were neither interested in recording their history nor inclined to force their way of thinking on any one. The basic ideology has been twofold. One, '*Ekam Sat Viprah bahudhah vadanti* – the Truth is one and the learned describe it in many different ways' and the second, '*Aano bhadra kratavo yantu vishvatah* – let noble and beneficial thoughts come to us from all sides of the world'. This eternal way of life, this age-old culture of ours is said to be five millennia old on the basis of the '*Saptarishi Samvat*' adopted by us from time immemorial. Ours is perhaps the only almanac in the country, that gives this '*Samvat*' and the running year is 5089.

An authentic recorded History in India, the '*Raja Tarangini*' has been written by a Kashmirian, Kalhana. Yet ironically we do not have any record of our cultural heritage and historical events of the prior period and, therefore, we are unable to paint an authentic picture of the life and faith of our ancestors who lived in this pious land. As in the rest of the country, we have to draw upon legends, fables and other types of literature, verbal or written, in order to visualize the picture of our ancient heritage. It is very significant that in the Indian tradition the two great epics, 'Ramayana' and 'Mahabharata' along with the

'Puranas' form the corpus of our history, from which we have to figure out what our past has been like. Kashmir also has its own 'Purana' called the 'Nilamat Purana', which throws some light on our heritage. This 'Purana' vouches for the fact that after the water was drained from the vast area of Sati Sar, sages were invited to settle in the valley and do their penance in the calm and peaceful environment of this sacred valley surrounded by the Western Himalayan ranges. The aborigines, Nagas, Pishachas, Shvapakas etc. were assimilated and became extinct as tribes in course of time. During this period the rituals and the injunctions of the Vedas only were followed. The inhabitants today in effect are, therefore, the progeny of the sages who settled here for penance and eventual emancipation with a sprinkling of immigrant population.

The fact that an important congregation of Buddhists was held in Kashmir, during the reign of the King Kanishka, shows that this ideology had found favour with the peace loving citizens of Kashmir in course of time. It is from here that the ideology travelled as far as Japan via Tibet and China. In Kashmir, however, a strong non-dualistic philosophy, called Kashmir Shaiva Darshan, drove out this ideology but not before it had left an indelible mark on our culture. There are a number of places, which are named after the 'Bauddha Viharas' and are called in local language as 'Yar'. In Srinagar itself we have a locality named as 'Bodager' a corruption from 'Buddha Giri' or the Buddha's hillock. These together with the non-violent passivity of Kashmiris and their life style imbued with the tenets of Buddhism stand testimony to the fact that this ideology had sway on our thinking for a long time. It was the effect of this philosophy that spirituality and divinity was manifest in the life style of the common man. Although Sikander but-shikan, who ruled from 1389 to 1413, destroyed many Hindu holy places and temples yet the ruins of temples at many places including that of Martand Temple stand testimony to the Sun worship also being prevalent here. There is a hill feature named as 'Aeta gaej' a corrupt form of Sanskrit '*Aaditya Guha*' meaning the cave of the Sun. This corroborates the fact further.

Towards the end of the thirteenth century and the beginning of the fourteenth century Islam came to Kashmir. On the one hand the invaders came to conquer and rule the land and on the other hand this place attracted the Muslim Sufis also. They had been victims of persecution in their countries of origin. These Sufis believed in '*Khalwa*' or spiritual retreat and propagated going from the outer exoteric to the inner esoteric. This way of thinking coincided with the

prevailing tradition of seeking to refine deeper realization of the Divine within one's consciousness rather than engaging in critical theological discussions. Thus came into existence a synthesized cultural framework that we proudly call 'The Rishi Cult'. Glimpses of this blended culture could be seen in the day-to-day life of an ordinary Kashmiri. There are innumerable holy places and shrines where both Hindus and Muslims would go to offer prayers. Hindus and Muslims revered Lal Ded and Peer Pandit Padshah, and other Hindu sages equally. Both the communities likewise held Nunda Rishi, Bata Mol Sahib, Dastagir Sahib and other Muslim saints in high esteem. Muslim boatmen would not consume meat and prohibited items like onion and garlic when they had to ferry pilgrims to the holy shrine of Rajna Bhawani at Tula Mula.

To sum up we can safely say that the origin of the cultural stream of Kashmir is Vedic. It has absorbed the influences from Buddhism. It has been shaped by the Trika philosophy of Kashmir Shaivism and it has drawn from the Muslim Sufism and in turn influenced it deeply. The enormous literature that has been produced by the sages and savants of this land portrays a picture of '*Jnana*' or Knowledge dressed in '*Bhakti*' or Devotion. The message has all along been one of humanism, simple living, high thinking, altruism, contentment, purity and piety. As regards the festivals and the rituals, these are primarily religious in character and therefore, different in different religious groups. But there are some commonalities. Distribution of '*Tahar*', the cooked yellow rice on festive occasions is common between Hindus and Muslims. Nightlong singing of hymns in praise of the Divine is another common feature. The annual '*Urs*' or commemorative days of various saints are also celebrated jointly by all the ethnic groups with due reverence. The Hindus of the valley are called Kashmiri Pandits or '*Bhattas*' meaning in Sanskrit the learned and honoured people. The important festival that has become their identity is the celebration of Shiva Ratri in the month of February. Unlike elsewhere in the country, here the festivities are fortnight-long and this festival has the same importance for us as the Ganesh Puja has for Maharashtrians and the Durga Puja has for the Bengalis.

When religions travel to new pastures they adopt many new things both ideologically and in order to gain acceptance among the local inhabitants. The Muslim Sufis of Kashmir could not also remain unaffected by the influence of the local tradition of theology, ideology and philosophy, which was

powerful enough to be resisted. Even though they continued to hold the Prophet and the holy Qura'n in high esteem, they absorbed the major tenets of the Hindu philosophy in their own spiritual practices and prescriptions. This became a very strong cementing factor between the Hindus and the Muslims. The lead had come from Lal Ded. Sufi poets have trodden on the same path and have earned respect, reverence and love from both the communities. Muslim singers sing Bhajans and hymns in praise of Hindu deities. Every classical singer sings the *Vakhs* of Lal Ded in the beginning before starting the Raga proper. The great names among Sufi poets like Shams Faqir, Shah Gafoor, Nyama Sa'b, Asad Parray, Ahad Zargar and host of others, have composed poems expounding '*Advaita*' or non-dualism, in a truly Hindu tradition. The Hindu poets like Paramananda, Prakash Ram, Krishna Razdan, Master Ji and others have excelled in devotional poems.

Post 1990 period has been a period of turmoil, which brought shame to the composite culture of the valley. Religious extremism and fundamentalism overran the tolerant '*Rishi*' cult that had kept the two communities together till then. The Hindus had to run for their life and honour. They were hounded out and forced to migrate to Jammu, Delhi and other parts of the country to escape the wrath of the foreign provoked and controlled militancy. One has only to hope that good sense will prevail and the culture of mutual respect and harmony, brotherhood and acceptance of diverse faiths will once again thrive in this lovely 'Garden of Sages'. The valley that is known by the name of Kashmir has been referred to in the history, literature, memoirs and scriptures by so many other names too, Kashyapmar, Kashparera, Pradhyumna-peetha, Sharada-peetha and Sati Sar etc. It has had so many epithets, Aden of the East, 'Bhushwarga', Paradise on Earth and so on. Just as every mountain peak of Kashmir is a place of pilgrimage, every spring is sacred and every cave is a shrine, every household of this holy land has produced a saint. Every village of this pious valley can boast of a sage of eminence. These saints and sages have perpetuated a tradition of peace and piety, truth and divinity that is fondly called the '*Rishi parampara*' or the tradition of sainthood. We all owe it to our motherland to bring back this glory to our land, where flowers of all hues will flourish and enchanting fragrance will spread in every nook and corner. Let there be peace and let people of diverse faiths live here with dignity and honour. When that happens, I as a true Kashmiri, shall distribute '*Tahar*' and '*Tsochi*' to all my friends and relatives.



Tej N Dhar

Hybrid Marriages

Last month I had the pleasant opportunity of attending a marriage, which was fabulous: the décor and ambience of the venues for its various functions, the variety of food that was available for the guests, and the overall atmosphere of gaiety was unbelievable. The marriage was of my friend's daughter who I learnt had chosen the groom on her own, and he was not from her community. In this atmosphere of warmth and colour in which all the guests had sumptuous meals for three days, nobody, except one, noticed something odd, and he made it a point to voice it loudly, so that people could hear him. What he said sounded unpleasant: Oh, these hybrid marriages! I don't know why parents allow such marriages.

The moment people heard those words, they moved their necks to see the person who had uttered them. I too looked in that direction, and saw a middle-aged man, well dressed for the occasion, with a glass of

what looked like whisky in his hand. Since I did not know him, I asked people around me if they did. One of them told me that he was a teacher in a private college and fond of commenting on societal matters. Another person told me that he taught political science and claimed to be an expert on postcolonial theory. The moment I heard that, I could understand wherefrom he had got the word to characterize the marriage of my friend's daughter.

In the postcolonial theory, hybridity is associated with the cultural mix that results from colonization. That is, the people dominated by foreign powers, the colonial subjects, are caught in-between their culture and of their colonizers. In modern times, though, the term is associated with people who, for whatever reason, leave their country to live in other countries. They carry with them the culture of their home country and try to take in elements from the new as well. In the context of the marriage of the daughter of



my friend, the professor possibly meant that it was a mixture of two cultures, because the marriage partners belonged to two different communities: the girl was from UP and the boy was from Andhra, and this one could see in the medley of ceremonies too. I told my friend not to feel disturbed by what the professor had suggested: that marrying outside of one's community was not desirable, and parents should disallow such marriages.

Despite what I told my friend, he looked disturbed. His sullen look suggested that he felt guilty, as if he had allowed an action that flouted the norms of propriety. I told him not to worry, because what the professor had said is not true. I held his hand and repeated that there was no truth in what the professor had said, but there was no change in him. In my attempt to get him out of his painful situation, I remembered our college days when we read philosophy with our favourite teacher. When I told him if he had any recollection of those days, his face brightened. To capitalize on this change, I reminded him of how our teacher had taught us Socrates and his method for judging the truthfulness of disapprovals.

I encouraged him to play out our favourite exercise. I told him that leaving aside the pretentiousness of what the professor had said—using a highly specialized vocabulary to describe an inter-community marriage—let us try to analyse the basis for his disapproval. He disapproves of the marriage of your daughter because it is against what he considers a socially sanctioned practice of children choosing life partners from within their own community. The basis for that practice was rooted in a social framework in which they invariably lived within compact geographical limits, which decided the limits of their social lives. That had set the social precedent of children marrying within the

community and according to an arrangement made by their parents.

Considering that the social structures had changed because of the increased mobility of young men and women, who no longer worked within the kind of limits of their older generations, changes in social practices were inevitable. Young men and women left their homes for higher education and in search of jobs in other parts of the country, which extended the limits of their social intercourse, and opened new possibilities of setting up their lives. If the daughter of the house had chosen a husband from another community, it was quite natural, because it was within reason. The assertion that what is popular is always right may not be true, for it leaves out of account the conditions that supported that thinking. So, there is no sense in disapproving actions that arise from this and no need to feel guilty about what the professor had said. I told my friend that by the standards he was applying to our daughter's marriage, his holding a glass of whisky in his hand was equally condemnable, because that too is not how our elders celebrated our festive occasions, but we do not condemn that because times have changed and his action satisfies the new norm. The same logic applies to your daughter's action too.

Besides, our daughter is not going into an alien culture, I told him. She is blending two sub-cultures, which are part of our overarching societal culture. Genetically, too, such marriages are welcome because they promise bright and clever children. They also help in bringing different communities closer to each other. Besides, our daughter is happy with the arrangement, and that is what matters.

I was happy to see my friend looking relaxed and smiling. I also realized that sometimes our old learning proves helpful in resolving tensions.



Savita Koul Shali

KECSS

A Bond with My Own Community

It is a pleasure for me that KECSS has given me the opportunity to work for its social activity programmes. It gives me learning experience to work with community seniors and I learn from them the essence of working for the community which in turn is enriching and virtuous for me. It fills me with enthusiasm and I am able to relate to my family elders who have been instrumental in establishing Pamposh Enclave. I relate to the young generation who hold a promise for community future. Long Live Kashmiri Pandit Culture.



Satish C Kaul

AUTISM, GOVERNMENT SCHEMES AND NEED TO WORK ON IT IN J&K AND LADAKH AFTER ABROGATION OF ARTICLE 370 OF INDIAN CONSTITUTION.

Before the abrogation of Article 370 of Indian Constitution the residents of erstwhile state of J&K faced lot of difficulties due to non-applicability of "The National Trust Act,1999 (No.44 of 1999) and there by deprivation of consequential benefits arising there from. Even after abrogation of Article 370 of Indian Constitution I have not witnessed much improvement on the subject so there is a need to make residents aware of the subject and N G Os must come forward to educate the people and render helping hand.

I have personally noticed that there are some children in J&K and Ladakh who are suffering from "Autism" and lack of facilities add to their pain and agony."Autism" is a development disability that affects the person in social relationships, communication and Imagination. My purpose of writing is concerned with conditions and rights of a person with "Autism"and his/her parents/caregivers/ attendants in J&K and Ladakh Union Territories. An autistic child specifically suffers from developmental difficulties mainly he can not communicate and understand the language.

There are number of beneficial laws in India, some of which were not applicable previously due to which residents of erstwhile state of J&K were deprived of the benefits given under them being welfare legislations. One of the most important is "**The National Trust Act,1999" for the welfare of persons with Autism. Cerebral palsy, Mental retardation & multiple Disablities (Ministry of Social Justice &Empowerment, Govt.of India).**

There is a National Trust at Delhi which was started with a corpus fund of Rs.100 Crores and every year crores of rupees are allocated to this Trust by Govt. of India for the welfare of the persons. Trust has good Schemes for empowering persons with disabilities like NIRAMAYA, GYAN PRABHA,UDDYAM PRABHA, SAMARTH & INSURANCE Schemes and all states and union territories are taking the benefits mainly through voluntary organizations (N G O's).

The purpose of my writing on the concerned subject is to highlight this genuine issue so that voluntary organizations can come forward and render services and make necessary efforts to redress this problem in J&K and Ladakh by following the action plan

1. To implement the National Trust Act,1999 being a welfare legislation.
2. Undertake publicity with regard to "Autism" and to undertake programs in raising public awareness about disorder.
3. Ensure benefits reach to the disabled person under PWD Act.
4. Create Special Schools and recruit special teachers for Training.
5. To include "Autism" in curriculum of Medical Education.
6. Tp provide Financial Assistance for running care to special autistic schools.
7. Grant recognition & certification to schools running educational programs to children with Autism-disabilities.

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Deepak Budki

Chinar on Fire

After about ten years, I have returned to the same valley where I was born and brought up. The only difference is that I have come as an exile to rediscover the land which was once upon a time mine. The land looks foreign to me and the people seem unknown. The fact remains that when your motherland is estranged everything looks unfamiliar and strange. The climate too is not congenial and probably expresses sympathies with me. Perhaps a tourist in the wrong season finds himself undesirable. Visiting the valley during the spring when it is flower-decked is altogether a different experience. Greyish blue mountains with white ice crowns and green grassy piedmonts enthrall you. Wherever your eyes wander you find flower beds and majestic chinars. It was this very dream that lured me to come back to the valley once again. But everything seems changed and different beyond my expectations.

The autumn leaves of chinars have all turned rust-brown. Most of them have fallen and scattered on the floor though some are still trying to cling to the tree branches. Once upon a time, these very leaves had worked day and night to help the mighty trees sustain themselves but then the season changed and they became vestigial and useless. Consequently, food and water were cut off to them. The trees had taken such extreme steps to survive the vagaries of the winter season. However, it cannot be denied that the foliage played a major role in the survival of the imposing chinars. Now that their colour has changed to yellowish brown they can neither synthesise food nor help in absorbing oxygen from the atmosphere. They are dead and waiting for the moment when some gust of wind will tear them off from their support.

Long ago when I used to live here, the condition of the chinar trees in autumn used to be similar but I would not bother myself about these changes because I thought it was a natural phenomenon. Nonetheless today I felt that there was something mysterious

behind these natural changes. In case the condition of your mind and the surroundings is indistinguishable then such natural changes yield their secrets to you. How true it is.

These jaundiced ochre-coloured leaves have enveloped my existence completely. The hand-shaped leaves have long crooked fingers on them which look like claws. Their veins are also visible. Numerous dead dried leaves are under my feet, rustling as I walk over them. They sob and lament the prevailing conditions. During my childhood, I used to enjoy the crackling of chinar leaves but now their whining makes me sad.

All of a sudden a strong gust of wind blew a dried ochre-brown leaf towards me and it wrapped my face. I caught hold of its stalk instantly with my right hand and fixed my gaze on it. In the meantime, an ear-splitting voice was heard. Maybe it was a thunderclap. I trembled due to fear. The chinar leaf suddenly said to me, "Don't worry friend, I have got used to it. I heard these rumbling noises every day when black clouds covered the sky above, when wind-blown dust enveloped me all over and when lightning flashed across. That time I clasped the branch on which I grew and fought against the hostile conditions as much as possible without letting fear overtake me. Many times rain fell in torrents over me drenching me yet I did not give up. I used to wait for the sun to shine again. At last, when the sun would shine I used to regain my strength and dance in joy. All my tissues would get activated again." I asked the leaf, "You spent everything for this tree that stands tall today and gave it life by working day in and day out. Yet you are in dire straits today."

"My dear friend, this is what is called life. It is true that I lost my sleep during the night and worked incessantly during the day to feed this tree. What did I get in return? Seclusion and blockade.....suffocation and abandonment...!" "I feel that you shouldn't have left your support." "I don't agree. When you cannot rely on your support it is better to get separated from

it." The rust-brown leaf stared at me. It had freed itself from time and space. I secured it by putting it into my pocket. In the meanwhile, the sky was covered by the dark clouds. Ice-cold winds were piercing my body like spears while time was striding along like an ostrich.

I thought to myself that I shouldn't have come to this place in this odd season. After all, what is available here? Wilderness....just wilderness and nothing else. I shuddered at the very thought of approaching winter and wondered why the tourists from the West thronged this place in such large numbers. What attraction was there in this frigid ice-cold winter in the valley? They traverse thousands of kilometres just to see the valley enveloped in the snow!

Snow-clad valley...! Freezing...! Frosty and hazy...! I felt compelled to compare the snow cover in winter to a large endless coffin. The silence of a graveyard overtakes the valley. Poor petrified people shiver under the cover of heavy snow. They pine in the four walls of their dwellings with doors and windows shut to make them windproof. They fear that any gust of freezing cold wind may snatch their precious life from them. They just live on the hope that someday spring will come and they will again be free to move around. Hope is the opium of life.

On the contrary, the foreign tourists are strange. They enjoy life even in the worst of times. The ochre-brown leaf in my pocket writhed with suffocation. I shared his grief equally and took it out again.

"Friend, you must have read in the newspapers that every year the river Jhelum overflowed its banks and inundated the entire valley. Thousands of houses were damaged. Innumerable plants got uprooted and drifted along with flowing water. I have been witness to those heart-wrenching scenes. Their roots were ripped out of the soil and once you are uprooted you cannot again grow in the same place." "But this chinar is standing erect majestically. Didn't it face the same winds and storms?" I enquired. "You are cent per cent right. This chinar fought with the winds and storms day and night but remained firmly stuck to its roots. Nevertheless, you must know that it is different from the rest." the ochre-brown leaf squirmed. "Those plants which got uprooted could also have withstood these storms. Why didn't they face the storms bravely?" I asked another question.

"You are naive. Unrealistic to the core. Bravery is not the only requirement to stand up against the vicissitudes of life. Tenacity, robustness and resources are also needed. To overcome the bad times the chinar tree has the advantage of its extra strong roots running deep into the soil. To uproot such a gigantic

tree is beyond imagination. On the other hand, to have similar expectations from tiny plants is not prudent. They cannot withstand normal winds, not to speak of storms. Worse still, the soil also did not support and stand by them. The soil, which was their last hope, itself eroded with the floods and consequently, the plants embedded in it also drifted along with."

"This chinar too has got denuded. It has no foliage on it." Suddenly this thought flashed in my mind.

"Perhaps you forget that seasons change and so does the climate. After winter, spring is bound to come. The buds on the branches of this chinar will sprout again. It will again turn green. However, it has to undergo the trials and tribulations of the winter. Surely the spring season will come."

This chinar tree stripped of its leaves by autumn winds is living with the hope of the future. Hope is the prime mover of this world. Those who got uprooted are lost forever. Their hopes are dashed forever. Or maybe they too survive. They may also find ways to survive in some way or the other.

To live is the ultimate reality. How one lives is nobody's concern. It is possible that some may not live as comfortably as the others. Indeed, a plant grows best in a particular environment suited to it. It withers in an exotic ecosystem and may even perish. Perish forever and just leave its memories...numerous memories. Memories that find a place in history... like memories of Pharaoh civilization...or, memories of Greek civilization...!

There may remain fossils or ancient relics. Or maybe Dinosaur, Archaeopteryx, Stonehenge and Jantar Mantar. Or even living fossils such as Ginkgo biloba and us, the migrants, who are dragging their withering generations along with time.

Suddenly, there was a blast somewhere in the distance. The earth under my feet shook heavily. The shaking was so intense that birds flew away from their nests chirping noisily. Far away on the main road, the dogs started barking and wailing. After some time incessant gunshots were also heard.

The caretaker of the guest house came running towards me and beseeched loudly, "Shaab! Shaab! Why are you standing here? Firing has started somewhere. A rocket has just fallen on the adjacent building. Shaab, it is very dangerous to stand here. Please go inside the guest house."

I went into the guest house to save my life. After gathering some courage, I lit my tobacco pipe and blew out clouds of smoke from my mouth while simultaneously questioning myself as to how far we keep running from reality, fearing and hiding and avoiding the ground reality.



Kashmir Herbology

Herbs have been an integral part of various cultures around the world for centuries for their medicinal, culinary, and spiritual properties. They also hold significant cultural and traditional value in Kashmir, often being used in rituals, ceremonies, and everyday life. Here are a few examples of herbs associated with Kashmiri Pandit culture:

Breyee

Jujube, *Ziziphus jujuba* (*Breyee* in Kashmiri) is a small edible acidic berry like fruit. It is a small deciduous tree, usually with thorny branches. The leaves are shiny green. The flowers of this fruit are small with inconspicuous yellowish green petals. The immature fruit is smooth green, maturing brown to purple black, and eventually wrinkled, looking like a small date with a single hard seed. In dry form it is used by Kashmiri Pandits during Shivratri and other puja.

Bread Mushuk

Bread Mushuk (*Salix Caprea* or pussy willow) is a common species of willow. The flowers are soft silky and silvery 3 to 7 cm long. Catkins (flowers) are

produced in early spring before the new leaves appear. Kashmiri Pandits used to place the branches of these Catkins (flowers) including other things on the *Thal* on the eve of *Sounth* and *Navreh*. In the wee hours on *Sounth* and *Navreh*, it is customary for all the members of the family to have *darshan*, called *buth vuchhun*, of *Sounth/Navreh thaal*.

Bunafsha

Bunafsha (*Viola biflora* Linn.) are annual under shrubs about 20-30 cm tall, stouts with thick root hairs and leaves simple, broadly ovate of about 1-4 cm across. This herb is much effective in jaundice, is anti inflammatory and anti bacterial. Syrup made of its flowers improves cough and cold suppression in children. It was believed that *Bunafsha* flowers are beneficial for eyes. *Bunafsha Khambeer* is used by Kashmiri populace, especially by children during harsh winters.

Khezaban

The cowslip (*Primula veris*) (*Khazaban* in Kashmiri) is the epitome of spring bloomers. For naturopathy,



Bimbima



Breyi

the cowslip has been playing a major role in the treatment of sinusitis or persistent colds for many years. Use as a medicinal herb: Cough whooping cough, flu infections, laryngitis, migraine, toothache. Use as aromatic herb: leaves for salads, flowers for desserts and fruit salads. After flowering, spherical capsules are formed with pale green bracts containing the seeds of the cowslip. This herb was used by Kashmir Pandits during harsh winters for cold and cough.

Ganhaar

Amaranth (*Ganhaar* in Kashmiri) (*Amaranthus caudatus*) is a nanosecond grain attained from its plant sown in May in rows along with the borders of cotton or sludge fields and gathered in September. Amaranth isn't nearly related to grains. Unlike grains, which have long and narrow leaves, Amaranth has broad leaves. The leaves and seeds of some species in the rubric are used for food and are used to produce a red colour. Kashmiri Pandits use its flakes during fast.

Gevthiir

Maidenhair fern (*Gevthiir* in Kashmiri) is an herb, widely grown in warm-temperature to tropical, with high moisture content. In Kashmir this herb was mostly found over spring banks. In Kashmir, this herb along with other herbs (*Lossi Gassi*, लोसि गॉसी in Kashmiri) was boiled in a large pot (urn) for hours together not less than 2 hours and this herb-infused water was used for the first bathe (usually consumed warm) of a woman after delivery.

Haand

Dandelion (*Haand* in Kashmiri) (*Tarazacum officinale* Linn.) is a low-growing herb with a rosette of jaggedly toothed leaves and a thick tap root that grows wild.

In Kashmir Haand is used as a tonic as well as for treatment of fractures. The preparation of Haand with fewer spices and mustard oil is given to "Looseh", a woman after delivery. Dandelion grows wild in meadows, lush green fields and flower beds. Eight types are Dandelion Greens are found in Kashmir which include *Wan Haand*, *Wari Haand*, *Meuudan Haand*, *Posh Haand*, *Haakh Haand*, *Saaz Haand*, *Keriri Haand* and *Dembeh Haand*.

Hamesh Bahar

Calendula (*Hameshbahaar* in Kashmiri) (*Calendula officinalis*) is a short-lived perennial and grows as an annual flower in garden beds and containers. In the olden days, it had been used for headaches, red eye, fever, and toothaches in Kashmir. In our childhood days, the paste of the *Calendula* plant was being applied over the wounds by our mothers since wounds were a common occurrence while playing cricket.

Isband

A Kashmiri tradition of burning a dry herbal seed of Rue (*Malvaceae*) called *Isband*, which when burnt in a fire produces an aroma to avert the evil eye. It is observed on auspicious occasions.

These seeds are held in the right-hand thumb and index finger and then applied to the forehead of the person, who is being blessed, along with her prayer for his/her prosperity and good health and then put in the fire pot (usually *Kangri*, known as *Isband Kangir*). Elderly ladies would recite the following 'wanvun wachun'.

"इसबन्द जालनस जंग कुस आव्यय
मंगला देवी त नंदकिशोर !"



Kalavyoth

Prunella Vulgaris or Heal-all (*Kalavouth* in Kashmiri) is a perennial herb of mint family. This herb is to display diverse biological activities including anti-microbial, anti cancer and anti-inflammation. Self-heal is low growing plant, and thrives in moist wasteland and grass, spreading rapidly to cover the ground. It grows in spring and autumn. The whole plant is used to treat cuts and inflammations and is used as an ingredient of some bodybuilding supplements. During our childhood days, we used to collect heal-all herb and sell it to Shri Jai Lal Wani, who was running a shop and used to sell different herbs etc during early seventies at village Murran, Pulwama.

Keneboeb

Euryale (*Keneboeb* in Kashmiri) is a perennial plant. It grows in water, producing bright purple flowers.

The plant produces starchy white seeds that are edible. The plant grows best in locations with hot, dry summers and cold winters. Seeds are collected in the late summer and early autumn and may be eaten raw or cooked. Wular Lake is a large producer of Keneboeb and the locals collect and sell the same at Habba Kadal and Kani Kadal in morning hours.

Kral Mond

Shepherd's Purse (*Kral Mond* in Kashmiri) (*Capsella bursa pastoris* Medic) is the tender shoots of the plant. It is known as the shepherd's purse because of its purse-like triangular flat fruits. It grows wild and is common on cultivated ground, waysides, meadows, flower beds, and vegetable beds. During my childhood days at village Murran, I used to take *Kral Mond* raw almost every day from its appearance in the vegetable beds. In Kashmir, we used to cook *Kral Mond* both in fresh and dry form as a vegetable.

Kratsh

Red Star Thistle (*Kratsh* in Kashmiri) (*Centuria Calcitrapa* Linn) grows in the wild and is a biennial plant growing erect to a maximum height of 1 to 1.3 metres with hairless and grooved stems and sometimes takes the shape of a mound. Red Star thistle grows on waste places, abandoned fields and roadsides.

In Kashmir, its leaves are cooked as vegetables. The leaves are rich in iron. The cooked vegetable is given to a woman after the delivery.

Liisiu

Liisiu (Amaranth leaves, *Amaranthus polygamous* Linn.) is a short plant. Also known as 'Chulai' it is an expectorant and its leaves are cooked as a vegetable. Amaranth is like spinach and is found mainly in flower beds, apple orchards, and vegetable beds and in the foothills of hilly areas. It grows wild and in various colours ranging from green, purple, red and gold depending on the area.

It grows from June to September. In Kashmir Amaranth is cooked with *Gordeul* (small sour green apricot).

Amaranth bath (rubbing the body with Amaranth leaves while bathing) on the day of '*Wehraat*' by Kashmiri Pandits is considered good for the digestive system.

Nunar

Purslane leaves (*Nunar* in Kashmiri) is a low-growing plant with succulent leaves and stems and contains significant amounts of Vitamins A and C. The oblong seed leaves are succulent. This salty, slightly sour plant is completely edible (i.e. leaves, stems and flowers) and provides some impressive health benefits. Purslane helps to improve the immune



Bredmushuk



Gevthiir



Hameshbahaar



Isband

system and keeps blood vessels and collagen in good shape. It prevents strokes, heart attacks and other heart diseases. In Kashmir, it grows wild between the cracks of sidewalks, unattended gardens, flower beds and kitchen gardens and is cooked with *Gourdael* and *Leeseh* (Amaranth).

Obuj

Sorrel (*Obuj* in Kashmir) (*Rumex acetosa* Linn.) is a

wild leafy plant, which is used traditionally as vegetables and for its medicinal uses. The plant has a sharp, sour taste. Its areal parts and leaves (when young) are used as vegetables and other parts are employed in the management of a number of ailments such as constipation, jaundice, mild diabetes, diarrhoea and as an analgesic against gallbladder, skin disorders, inflammation and liver. Kashmiri Pandits used to cook Sorrel as a vegetable. *Obuj* and fish is the favourite dish of Kashmiri Pandits.

Pambiu Tsaalan

Pambiu Tsaalan, (English name Himalayan Rhubarb and botanical name *Rheum emodi* Wall) is a root of a plant used against rheumatic pain and wounds.

Pambiu Tsaalan is a mild purgative, astringent, tonic, laxative, stomachic, and aperient. In Kashmir its paste was being applied over ulcers for quick healing.

Shanguir

Glycyrrhiza glabra (*Shanguir* in Kashmiri), also known as sweet wood or *Mulaithi*.

In Kashmir *Shanguiri Kahwa* is famous which is given to young and old when they are suffering by bad cold especially during harsh winters.



Haand



Kahzaban



Kalavyoth



Tethwen

Common Wormwood (*Tethwen* in Kashmiri) (*Artemisia absinthium* Linn) is a plant, which grows wild, has whitish green leaves with fine silk hairs with yellow-green flowers and is bitter in taste.

During our childhood days, elders used to give the extraction of the leaves, a green viscous liquid to children to remove worms and whenever a child gets a hint that he is going to be given the '*Thethwan Rus*', there used to be chaos in the house. Two members of the house used to force the child to drink this juice by holding the arms and legs and by closing his nostrils.

Tsokiu Tsuin, चओकह चईण

Indian Sorrel also known as Sour Grass Wood Sorrel (*Tsokiu Tsuin* in Kashmiri and Khatti Booti in Hindi) is a creeping leafy green delicate, herbaceous and low-growing plant about the height of 25 cm. This plant usually grows in open gardens, grasslands, riversides, along roadsides and mountains.

This herb helps in digestion, stimulates appetite, treats urinary tract disorders, rejuvenates the whole body, improves breathing, prevents ageing, relieves cough, relieves breathing difficulties, treats indigestion, controls hiccups, relieves sore throat,



Nunar



Keneboeb



Liisiu

treats eye problems, prevents bleeding, treats insomnia, relieves excessive thirst, improves muscle strength, treats ringworm infections, improves intelligence, improves complexion and improves voice. In Kashmir its leaves and tender stems are cooked into a delicious dish, sour in taste. Village children relish it raw.

Vaayi

Vaayi Gandiur (Sweet Flag or *Acorus calamus* Linn.) is a tall perennial wetland monocot. Sweet flag has a very long history of medicinal use in Indian herbal traditions. The leaves, stems, and roots are used in various Ayurvedic medicines. It is widely employed in modern herbal medicine for its sedative, laxative, diuretic, and carminative properties. Kashmiri

Pandits use it on *Sonth* and *Navreh* as a part of a ritual called *Thall Barun*.

Voopal Haak

Himalayan Teasel (*Voopal Haak* in Kashmiri) is a perennial herb with palmately lobed leaves growing from a taproot up to 35 mm in diameter. It produces a basal rosette of leaves. The plant is harvested for local use as a food and medicine. It is said to be effective herb for stimulating bone growth, after the fracture.

Its leaves are cooked as a vegetable. Kashmiri Pandits cook this herb on festive occasions like Shivratri, marriage ceremony, Yagnya etc

This herb is also used by Kashmiri Pandits as traditional medicine for treatment of swelling, cough, sore throat and body ache.



Kralmond



Vai or Vaigandar (Kashmiri Name)

Botanical name : *Acorus calamus* (also called sweet flag, sway or muskrat root).

Vai - *Acorus calamus* has been traditionally used by Kashmiri Pundit community for its various medicinal uses. It has usually been used by one and all to be kept along with other things – rice, bread, salt, curd, milk, walnuts etc. in the traditional “THAALI” that is arranged on the auspicious occasions of “SONTH” & “NAV-REH”, for early morning Darshans by the family members.

My maternal grandmother would use it as an insecticide in Rice drums. Its small pieces of cut rhizomes would be distributed as Prashad by our revered Guru Maharaj.

Since the KP community is spread all over the globe post 1990; for easy identification, the other vernacular names of Vai are- Ayurvedic Vacha, Unani Bacch; Hindi Bajai, Bach, Gora-bach, Vasa bach; Sanskrit Ugragandha, Ugra, Sadgrantha, Bhutanashini; English Sweet Flag, Calamus, Myrtle grass; Gujarati Vekhand, Ghoduvaj, Ghodavach; Bengali Bach Marathi Vekhandas, Vaca; Kannada Baje, Narru-Berua; Telugu Vasa; Malayalam Vayambu; Urdu Waja-e-Turki; Punjabi Varch, Ghodavaca; Tamil Vasambu, Pillai maruntho; Nepali Bojho.

It is a species of flowering plant with psychoactive chemicals. It is a semi-aquatic, perennial, aromatic herb found in aquatic habitats in temperate to sub-temperate regions. It is around 1 to 2 mts tall, of the family Acoraceae. It has arching tapered reed-like leaves, minute yellow-green flowers along spadix, and scented rhizomes.

Although used in traditional medicine over centuries in India, China & Europe to treat digestive disorders and pain, there is no clinical evidence for its safety or efficacy.

It grows in India, Nepal, central Asia, southern Russia and Siberia, Europe and North America. Habitats include edges of small lakes, ponds and



rivers, marshes, swamps, and other wetlands. It is indigenous to Eastern Europe and Central Asia. It is also cultivated. In India, It is generally present in Manipur, Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Karnataka, Sikkim, and Naga hills of India. In the Himalayas, it is discovered up to an altitude of 2000 m. In the Ayurvedic system of medicine, the rhizomes of *Acorus calamus* are considered to possess aromatic, stimulant, bitter tonic, emetic, expectorant, emmenagogue, aphrodisiac, laxative, diuretic, antispasmodic, carminative, and anthelmintic properties; used for the treatment of a host of diseases such as mental ailments like epilepsy, schizophrenia, and memory disorders, chronic diarrhea and dysentery, bronchial catarrh, intermittent fevers, tympanitis, colic, otitis media, cough, asthma, and glandular and abdominal tumors. Also used traditionally for flatulent colic and chronic dyspepsia, for kidney and liver troubles, rheumatism, and

eczema. The skin of the rhizomes is said to be hemostatic. The rhizomes are used in the form of powder, balms, enemas, and pills.

Since antiquity, *Acorus calamus* rhizome has been used for medicinal baths, in incense, and for tea. The powdered rhizome is used as an insecticide for the destruction of fleas, bedbugs, moths, lice, and so forth. The rhizomes are used in incense sticks. It is effective in killing insect pests in stored rice and is considered to be better than chemicals for this purpose as it shows no residual effect. Its therapeutic uses are reported to be described in Ayurvedic textbooks like *Charak Samhita*, *Sushruta Samhita*, etc. Studies reveal that its rhizomes contain an aromatic essential oil which has significant anticonvulsant activity. Vacha roots are efficient to treat memory loss, Alzheimer's disease, tremors, anxiety, depression, and pain disorder of neurological origin. It contains various chemical constituents; the major constituent

of oil of Vacha is a phenylpropanoid called β -asarone, that possesses carcinogenic properties and therefore the Ayurvedic system makes use of shodhit (detoxified) Vacha in their formulations.

One European reference highlights that, "I blend it into my tea each morning for a bit of extra liver stimulation. Though preferred mode of enjoyment is to simply chew on some small root pieces. It helps in sore throat – a real gift to singers, teachers, and others who speak a lot. It has a lovely ability to help you shift more easily into the parasympathetic nervous system state, leaving the tension of fight-or-flight behind. It brings you into a state of wide-angle perception, just the opposite of the tunnel vision that comes with a stress response. It's perfect for meditation".

(Compiled by Ashok Manvati from different references)

14th March, 2024; Noida



हिंदी रूपांतर - सुभाष प्रेमी 'सुमन'

मूल कश्मीरी

छस बं पानस हिश फकत, ओस शिकव तस,
वन्य म्य ह्युव आसुन छु तमि सुंद ख्याब ज़न ।

हिंदी रूपांतर

खलता था उसको मेरा मुझसा होना,
अब है उसका ही सपना मुझसा होना ।

मूल कश्मीरी

यस प्रजनथ दावस, प्रुछितव तस,
किथु प्राण पनन्य छकरावान गव ।

हिंदी रूपांतर

पूछो उससे , लगी दांव पर जिसकी थी अपनी पहचान,
कैसे गया बिखेर कहीं पर, अपनी हस्ती, अपनी जान ।



मूल कश्मीरी - सुनीता रेणा पंडित

मूल कश्मीरी

ज़ं ओसुख भीष्मन्य हिश छ वप करिथ वुछ,
बं ओसेस दोह कड़ान दोहदिश मरिथ, वुछ ।

हिंदी रूपांतर

भीष्म - पितामह से बैठे तुम चुप्पी धारण करके,
मैंने काटा है जीवन का हर इक दिन मर - मर के ।

मूल कश्मीरी

ज़ं छुख म्यानि रोस तति परेशान, यि छा पोज़?
ज़ं मोनुख न पतु कांसि भगवान, यि छा पोज़?

हिंदी रूपांतर

मेरे बिना हो वहां पर स्वयं तुम परेशान, सच है?
तुमको वहां फिर किसी ने न माना है भगवान, सच है?



Sharika Tirtha (Hari Parbat)



Chakreshwari, the abode of Sharika Bhagwati (Hari parbat)

The Kashmiri Pandit Saptarshi Samvat, since 6000 years consider the days of Ashad Shukla Paksh Saptami, Ashtami and Navami, the most auspicious and sacred days, as the Sharika Bhagwati, is believed to have made Sharika Tirtha (Hari Parbat) as Her abode. Ever since the Puja and Archana takes place regularly at Hari Parbat with great enthusiasm and devotion. These three days are also dedicated to Sun God and Kashmiri Pandits seek his blessings too. The ritual is observed, as first woman of the family would make the Haar Mandul with different kinds of coloured limes, added with turmeric and powdered dried leaves of the mulberry trees, drawing the seven Chakras. Also the Taher (yellow rice) prepared with all sanctity, is partly offered to Surya Deva and rest is taken as Prasad by the family.

Ashad Navami (Har Navum) is the birthday of Sharika Devi known as Sharika Jayanti. The Sharika Tirtha is the abode of Mahashakti--- Divine Mother Goddess Durga. The eighteen-armed Goddess

Sharika, Ashtadushbuja, is regarded one of the Isht Devi of Kashmiri Hindus. In Tantra Shastra, Para-Shakti is known as Tripurusundri. The sacred shrine of Sharika Devi is situated on Hari Parbat hill, in the heart of Srinagar city and is one of the oldest Shakhta shrines of Kashmir. Pandit Kalhana, in Rajatarangni, has described Hari Parbat as “the epicentre of spiritualism in Kashmir”.

A legend is associated with the Hari Parbat shrine. A powerful demon, Jalodabhava lived in the waters over the place where the hill is. The demon harassed and troubled the Rishis. The Rishis prayed to Goddess Parvati to free them from the demon. The Goddess assumed the form of a bird called Har in Kashmiri, Myna and dropped a celestial pebble which she was carrying in her beak, at the spot where Jalodabhava the water demon was laying. The pebble grew into a hillock, pinning the demon down forever. The Goddess in grateful memory of deliverance took up Her abode at the hill-top and is worshiped as

Sharika Bhagwati. The hill is called Hari Parbat --- the hill of Sharika. The legend goes that, the miracle happened on the day of Ashad Shukla Paksh Navami, known in Kashmiri language as Har Navam. The Hindus of Kashmir celebrate this day as birthday of Sharika Bhagwati with great reverence and devotion. Hindus from faraway places join the festivities.

In Chakreshwari shrine, at Hari Parbat, Sharika is manifest in the form of Chakreshwari, symbolized by Sri Chakram, which is engraved upon the vertical holy rock, known as Shilla, located in the middle of the western face of the Chakreshwari shrine. The Shilla is smeared with Sindhoor. The Sri Chakram is a symbolic representation of the cosmic union of Lord Shiva and Shakti. It is a famous Yantra.

A verse from 'Rudra Yamala Tantra' describes Sri Chakram as; "The point, the group of 8 triangles, two groups 10 triangles, the group of 14 triangles, 8 petalled lotus, the 16 petalled lotus, the three circles and the quadrangular ramparts all round constitute the Sri Chakram of the Supreme Mother." In the Yantra (i) the inner group forming the central dimensionless point (Bindu), the primary triangle (Trikona) with its apex downwards and the figure of eight corners (Astakona) symbolize bliss, Laya or absorption, (ii) the middle group forming the figure of ten angles (Antradasara), another figure of ten angles (Bahirdasara) and the figure of fourteen angles (Catur-dasara) symbolizes mastery over the worlds, preservation or Sthiti and (iii) the outer group consisting of the eight petalled lotus (Asta-dalapadma), the sixteen petalled lotus (Sodasa-dalapadma) and the square field (Bhupura) symbolize extension or Srsti.

The shrine of Chakreshwari is also known as Pradyuman Peeth, Sidh Peeth, Shakti Peeth and Sharika Peeth. Bhagawati Mantra is of seven 'Bijakhsharas' symbolic of Sharika, seven Sages and seven Lokas. In Tantra Shastra, Udharkosa is a unique Grantha. The first half includes 25 Patalas (paragraphs) and has been composed in the form of Adhyayas (chapters) dealing mainly with Bhijamantras of Gods and Goddess. Similarly, the other half contains 35 Adhyayas (chapters) which also deals in detail the Bhija-mantras. The Mantra is a verbal expression, and Yantra or Sri Chakram is visual expression, of Divine Mother.

The devotees who concentrate on the Sri Chakram, seek awaken their spiritual consciousness, Kundalini Shakti. The 'Kundalini Yoga' is the main theme of the 'Pancastavi'. Its five Hymns are descriptive prayers to 'Tripurasundari', which is very common with Kashmiri Pandits.

The Gita speaks, of Para Prakrti, which is none other than Para-Shakti. The collective energy of Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh is known as Tripura or Sri Tripursundhari. In Tantra, Shiva and Shakti are not two different entities. It is Shiva as Shakti. The appearance of both is like the two sides of the same coin. The dynamic aspect of the highest Reality is Para-Shakti and its static aspect is Parma-Shiva.

According to the Upanishad, Shiva's Para-Shakti is manifold, as described in the Veda, the natural energies of knowledge, power and action. Jnana, Bala and Kriya correspond to Jnana Shakti, Iccha Shakti and Kriya Shakti respectively. Tantras corroborate the Vedic classification of Shaktis. Along with the power of Shiva to conceal---Pidhana and power of favour---Anugraha, the Shakti constitute its five-fold expression of Para-Shakti. Para Shakti is the primeval source, the Supreme Mother, with five glorious natural energies. Adi Sankaracharya describes in a Shloka of his Saundarya Lahari, 'Whereas most Gods bestow the boon of fearlessness on their devotees by raising their right hand in Abhaya Mudra, Mother Goddess Durga bestows benedictions from Her Holy Feet. Those who bow their heads at the feet of Goddess Durga attain their cherished goal.' Ksemaraja explains in Bhatta Narayana, "We bow to Shiva who, enjoining His five-fold glory reveals the spiritual Shakti, the power of consciousness and bliss." Para- Shakti is the original source, the Supreme Mother, with five glorious natural energies. Sri Ramakrishna Paramhansa, has described Kundalini Shakti in his Gospel as; "The centre at the heart corresponds to the fourth plane of the Vedas. There is in this centre a lotus called 'Anahata' with 12 petals. The centre known as 'Vishudha' is the fifth plane. This centre is at throat and has a lotus with 16 petals. When the 'Kundalini' reaches this plane, the devotee longs to talk and hear only about God. A conversation on worldly subjects, on 'Kamini' and 'Kanchan', causes him great pain. He leaves a place where people talk of these matters. Then comes the sixth plane corresponding to the centre known as 'Ajna'. The centre is located between the eyebrows and it has a lotus with two petals. When the 'Kundalini' reaches it, the aspirant sees the form of God. It is like a light inside a lantern. You may think you have touched the light but in reality you cannot because the barrier of the glass. At last of all is the seventh plane, which according to the 'Tantra', is the centre of the 1000 petalled lotus. When the 'Kundalini' arrives there, the aspirant goes into 'Samadhi'. In that lotus dwells 'Sat Chitanand Shiva' the absolute. The 'Kundalini', the awakened power, unites with 'Shiva'. This is known as Union of 'Shiva' and Shakti".

On Navreh, the New Year Day of Kashmiri Hindus, which falls in the month of Magh and during the days Navratra, devotees regularly visit the Hari Parbat for special prayers and worship of Sharika Bhagwati. Some selected verses of 'Sundaryalahari,' 'Pancastavi' and 'Durga Saptshati' dedicated to Divine Mother are recited by devotees at the shrine.

A number of holy spots and temples are located on all sides of the Hari Parbat hill. The devotees undertake Parikrama of the whole of hillock. The Parikrama would start from the Mahaganeshas shrine (Ganishon), which is located on the south-western spur of the hillock. Sri Ganesha is represented by a huge rock, 'Shila' smeared with 'Sindoor'. He is worshipped both in the form of image and Yantra inside the temple. The 'Swastika' is known as graphic symbol of Lord Ganesha. After prayers at Mahaganeshas, devotees move towards the rock, known as 'Sapat Rishi', with which the earliest scientific calendar devised by Kashmiri Pandits, now 6000 years old is associated, and is worshipped. Further onto the cluster of four Chinars known as 'Lal Ded's Boni' and from there, devotees move to a small temple of Mahakali. In front of the Kali temple is a large chunk of land known as Sidh Peeth. It is believed that great saints of Kashmir, Rish Peer, Krishna Kar, Sahib Koul, Madhav Dhar and others meditated here and attained divinity. After Sidh- Peeth, next is Devi Angan at the foot of the hill with Chakreshwari temple at the hilltop. A flight of steps one hundred and eight in number lead to the Chakreshwari temple. The steps are wide, and made of dressed stone slabs. Devotees then move towards Mahalakshmi sthapna. On its left is Amber Koul temple dedicated to Lord Krishna.

A long trail of about a kilometer ahead is Pokhri-

Bal. It is situated well below the hillock on the banks of Nagin Lake. Pokhri means spring and Bal as place, --- the place of springs. The holiest of springs at Pokhribal is known the Amrit Kund. This is a square shaped clear water spring, surrounded by Chinar trees. An ancient Shiva temple stands overlooking the holy Kund. The Amrit Kund is the place where the holy feet of Goddess Sharika are supposed to rest. The holy water of Amrit Kund is sacred and refreshing to devotees, who reach there after a long Parikrama of Hari Parbat. A temple dedicated to Mother Raghnya is a part of Pokhribal complex, besides number of rest rooms, a community kitchen. Other facilities are also available for the devotees. Special Puja is offered on certain auspicious days at Pokhribal. On Hura Ashtami, on the eve of Shivratri devotees cluster around the Amrit Kund and recite Sholakas from the scriptures and sing Bajans collectively throughout the night. Next morning Taher, yellow cooked rice, is distributed as Prasada. Before devotees reach the exit gate, Kathidarwaza, there is a small Hanuman temple at the right side of the foothill. Hanuman is a very popular deity. This is the last holy spot on the Parikrama route.

On the top of the southern spur of the Hari Parbat hill, the Mughal rulers constructed a fort, which is known as Hari Parbat fort. Inside the fort there is an ancient temple, which was renovated by Dogra kings. The temple is located on the upper terrace of Hari Parbat Fort. It is believed, that the temple enshrined an idol of Sharika Devi. During Muslim rule, the devotees of the Sharika took it to Sarthal in Doda, in the interior of Jammu, to save it from desecration, at the hands of Muslims. The deity is known as Sarthal Devi in Doda now.

(Source---Kashmir Hindu Shrines by Chaman Lal Gadoo)



(Lt. Governor of Jammu and Kashmir hoisted a 100-foot tall national flag at the Hari Parbat Fort in Srinagar as part of celebrations for the 75th Independence Day of India)



An Interview with Sunita Raina Pandit

While the violence in the Kashmir Valley is often talked about, not much is said of the success of its people in fields of academia, sports and entertainment. Same is the case with literature. Now, however, several young and budding writers from the region have come to the fore much to the delight of book lovers. Over the past several years, many young writers have made their debut through their novels and poetry and one such big name is Sunita Raina Pandit. Here is the transcript of my conversation with her:

Q. How the writer inside you woke up and when did this happen ?

SRP : I was 14 years old when I picked up the pen. It was something inside which was prompting me to write. Now I do realise that most of the born poets and writers have actually started their work at this age.

I initially started with Bhajans (Leela) and slowly it reached to Vaakhs, Vachuns, Ghazals, Two liners etc. I had no idea to execute my thoughts because at that point of time my age and exposure, both were not in my favour. After some time I could realise that in fact no higher qualifications or degrees are needed to put your mind on the paper. I was very fond of listening to ghazals especially of Pakistani origin and it helped me to observe my writings. After a couple of years I started writing in both Hindi and Kashmiri.

Q. Did you face any problems while traveling into this profession ?

SRP : Expectations of my parents were different, they wanted me to devote my attention towards my studies. On number of occasions I was scolded for my behaviour but the poet inside me was not listening. Whatever I used to write, I used to conceal it somewhere from the eyes of my parents. After my marriage I did my best to engage myself into new home but the poet inside me kept knocking. It was



Sunita Raina Pandit

very difficult to carry on with both but being a woman, I had to.

Q. Whom do you give the credit of your success ?

SRP : Credit of my success goes to my husband Ashok Pandit, who not only helped me in the marketing of my material but also helped me to register myself in the history. He managed all my events, publishing and helped me to prove my worth. He provoked me to write and I got more recognition than I deserved. I have dedicated one of my Ghazal collections "Sonzal" to my husband.

Q. How did exodus influence your writing skills?

SRP : In 1986, when I left valley due to some unrest in certain parts of Kashmir, I started writing in Hindi because at that point of time I thought that I will have no one to follow my literature in Kashmiri. Kashmiri poet in me stopped for some time but after the exodus of my community in 1989, I decided to derive something from the pain, separation, restlessness and I started taking the advantage of the frustration inside me. I converted the sufferings of community into poetry. I could get a feeling of “ Vaikhuri “. Sidarth Tiku, a short filmmaker contacted me for a song for one of his films. I wrote...“ Yi Gudrun Lani Gav Lekhit Su Dodah, Kaleyas, Zev Tcheni Ishar Rovum “

Q. How difficult was it to choose this field?

SRP : There was no resource and guidance when I decided to choose this field. As a child I was uncertain of my future. This was never chosen as an earning profession. This profession is a God's gift and in fact is not chosen wilfully.

Q. How do you see the future of Kashmiri script?

SRP : No script ever dies.... yes it gets damaged when it doesn't get processed and processing takes place when languages are spoken and respected. Children of both Pandit and Muslim communities of Kashmir have adapted to other languages of their choices which is really unfortunate. This hasn't happened with other languages. Literature is the soul of a language and it can't run without that, this is certainly a matter of concern for me and other people who have worked hard to preserve it.

Q. What are the areas you have tried to cover in your poetry?

SRP : Normally all the areas get automatically covered in a poetry. Every day we experience new things in our lives and these are the real areas. Poetry has to be contemporary and it has traveled ages. Thought worldwide is same but there are different ways to project it. Contemporary poetry helps it to reach masses. It helps in prolonging the age of poetry. We should never write to make audience happy, we should write to reach out to the audience. Future generations should come to know the social, economical, cultural and traditional values of the time when a poetry has been written. Poetry should give a feeling to the reader that he is a part of it.

Q. Have you written in other languages as well?

SRP : My first book “ Chinar Ke Aansu “ was in Hindi

and it was published in 1998. I have mostly written in Kashmiri and Hindi.

Q. How many books are to your credit and which one got the maximum appreciation?

SRP : In Hindi my first collection was “ Chinar Ke Aansu. Then five Ghazal collections in Kashmiri. Besides that my books were translated in English by Prof Arvind Gigoo and Late Prof R N Kaul. The titles of books are “ Light and Shade “ and “ A Walk Through The Mist “. All my books got great appreciation beyond my expectations.

Q. How many of your books have been translated in other languages?

SRP : Besides the translations done by Prof. Arvind Gigoo and Prof R N Kaul some of my work was translated by Mr. Arvind Shah and Mr. Amar Nath Dhar in English. Mr Gouri Shanker has translated some work in Hindi. Dr Nazir Azad from Kashmir has translated some of my Ghazals into Urdu. Some of my work also stands translated into Telugu and Kanada.

Q. Has your lyrics ever been used by singers and who are they?

SRP : Assad Ullah Yetu, Shazia Bashir, Ravi Bhan, Sunita Bhat and Deepali Wattal are some singers who have used my compositions but overall much of my lyrics has not been used by the singers, maybe due to my absence in the state because there are many factors revolving around singers.

Q. What was the public reaction to your poetry?

SRP : Besides recognition in the Sahitya fraternity, I was well received in the public domain. People from all streams found themselves attached to my writings. This was really the best award I could have won.

Q. Felicitations and rewards to your credit?

SRP : Vishv Samvaad Kendra Meerut has awarded me with Keshav Samvad Samaan for Kashmiri literature. Nagrad Sangam, Jammu Kashmir Vichar Manch, KECSS Delhi, AIKS are other organisations which have honoured me from time to time.

Q. Whom do you see as your inspiration for this long journey?

SRP : My surroundings, my pains and adverse conditions compel me to write. Then the contributions of my husband has been my support. Then above all the SELF is the biggest inspiration. “ Me Tchhe Haimtch Arzand Vaend Rashmetch, Me N Aaadad Paknas Thaph Keir Keir “. Silence is a booster in itself.

Q. Who are other Kashmiri writers , whom you rate high... deceased or alive ?

SRP : It will be so low of me to name only a couple of people whom I admire. Literature of Kashmir is very rich and credit goes to several legends. I would not like to name anyone of such people who left this world before my entering into this field, however some living legends include Prof. Rahi, Jinab Farooq Nazki, Jinab Ayaz Nazki, Majruh Rasheed, Prof Shafi Shokh, Jaman Azurta, Moti Lal Naz ji, Autar Krishen Naz Ji, Bal Krishen Saniyasi ji, Brij Nath Betab ji, Ashok Ji Gauwhar, Ravinder Ravi Ji, Ashok Saraf ji, Moti Lal Masrouf Ji, Prof R L Shant ji... and many others.

Q. Are you worrying about the perishing Kashmiri literature ?

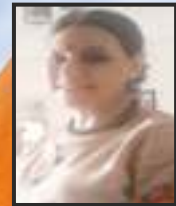
SRP : Kashmiri literature has lot of soul left in it and I don't think much damage is done but yes the worth reading literature is yet to reach masses. The greatest threat is foreseeable. If the mother tongue is forgotten the way it is happening right now, we won't see our future generations showing interest in Kashmiri literature and this will certainly lead to the damage. It is certainly worrisome.

Q. What is your message to the blooming young writers of Kashmiri literature.

SRP : My message to the upcoming and blooming writers of Kashmiri literature is a big one but I don't see many budding writers in the line to hear me. I see a complete darkness ahead. Let's hope it revives and new generations take interest in the Kashmiri script.

OUR PROGENY Budding Writer

That Chinar!



Monika Ajay Kaul

That Chinar was garden's oldest.
Years after years, prosperous Earth
made it adept and wise.

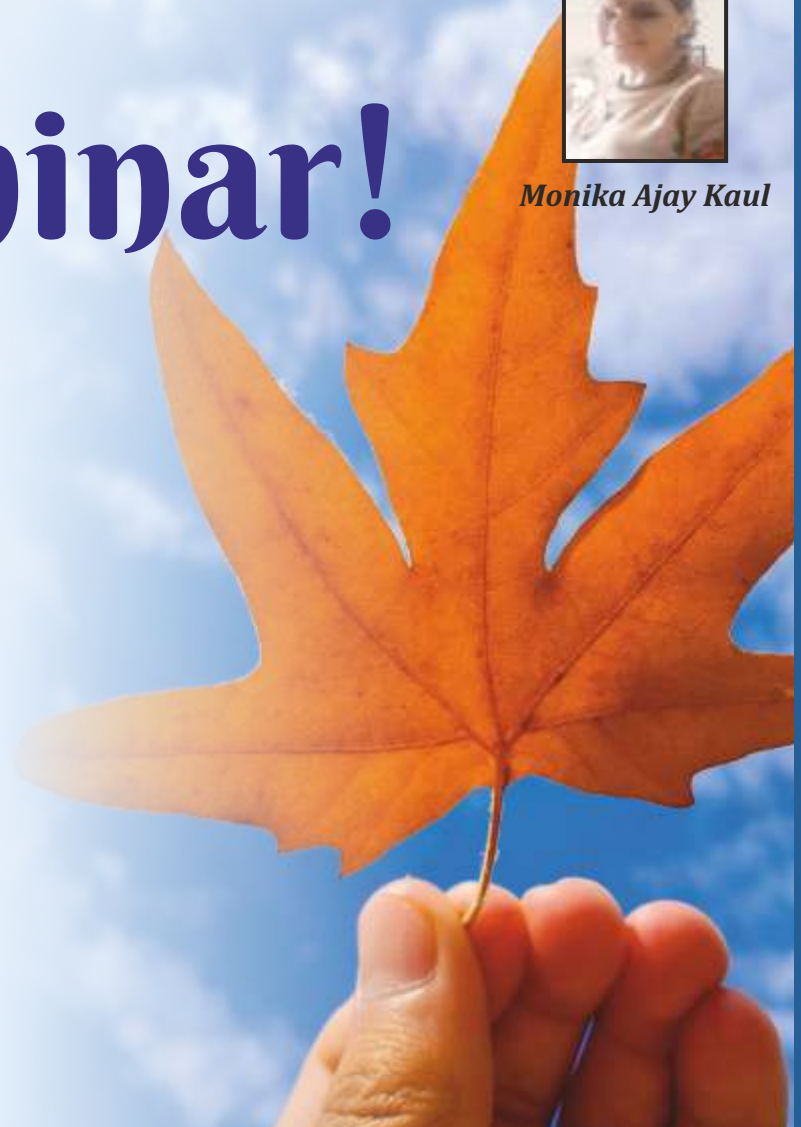
It stood firm with each season change..
In summer glare, it offered
faunae, to make their stage.

Seeing Spring's window ajar,
bees and butterflies found some nectar
and creepers too swirled,
bracing the stalks.

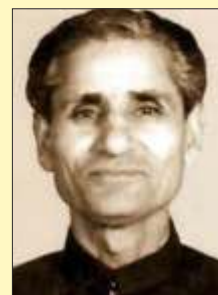
Winter slowly made it stark.
With limbs raised towards the Sun;
begging for alms so as to bask.

As a child, I spent my days
in its benevolent arms, with my
eyes still looking below for some clovers.

It stood tall for me
whenever I needed it the most.
It taught me a life lesson,
that conscience remains untold.



BOOK REVIEW



Koshur Ramayana

Authored by	:	Pandit Sarvanand Kaul Premi (2.11.1924-- i. 5 1990)
Published by	:	Rajinder Pemi, Satita Vihar, New Delhi
Kashmiri in Devanagri rendering by	:	M. K Raina
Price	:	Rs 500/=
Review by	:	Dr Chaman Lal Raina

Pandit Sarvanand Kaul Premi Ji has given the Kashmiri flavour to the chapters, as mentioned in the Vyestara, as is evident from the titles changing the Word Kanda in the Kashmiri context. This is poet's wonderful idea. This is the beauty of the chapters. In all there are 50 sub-titles. So the vastness of the Valmiki Ramayana and the Ramacharita Manasa of Tulsidas has been put within the quintessence of 50 subtitles.

This has put this Ramayana in the appreciating theme, of the Stotra literature. It is the Koshur Ramayana in the eulogy form, presenting the very breath of the Ramayana story, easily intelligible to the modern readers. Of course, it is a Dharmik interpretation of the vastness of the Ramayana. It is spiritual in content, with the Meter applied in the Mantrik Bhajans.

This Koshur Ramayana, when viewed from the point of 'Sociology of Religion' concerns the dialectical relationship between the Sanatana Dharma and the society. The religious practices, with historical backgrounds, and theological developments, are seen in this grand poetic composition of fifty sub-titles. The universal theme of the Valmiki Ramayana has been maintained to give credence to Shri Rama, as the Mariyada Purushottama ---the human being with the noblest virtues within the prescribed social norms of the then Bharata of the Treta Yuga. His role of Avatara Purusha in society, has been based on the Ramcharita Manasa of Tulsidas. The [poet considers Shri Rama as the Dharma Purusha. This is the question of belief.

There seems a particular emphasis on the recurring role of Kshetriya Dharma, as is seen in the poetic narration of "Vishwamitras Sutya Ram Tu Lakshman", to be translated as---Rama and Lakshmana with Vishwamitra. The important facets of recorded history about the Ramayana in the Sanskrit texts has been included in this Ramayana, to give credence to the social norms, but the theme is of the Ramacharita--Manasa.

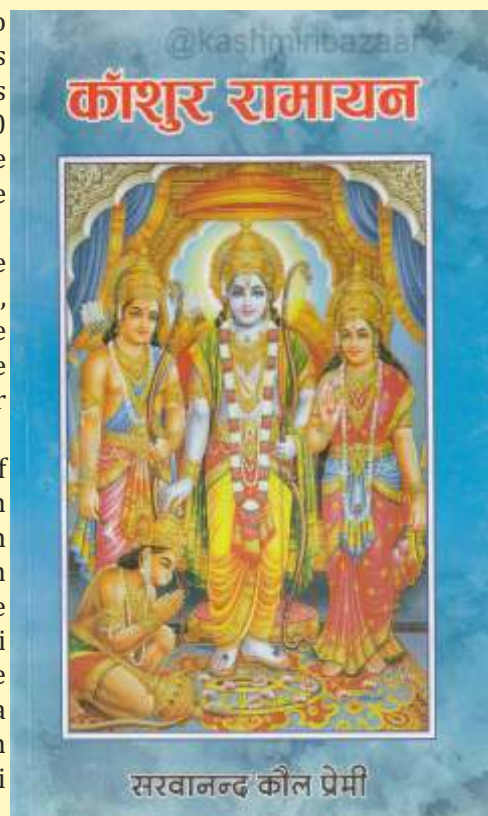
Shri Rama is said to be the Saviour of Ahalya--the wife of the Rishi Gautama of the Post Vedic period.

The poet writes:

Triyaa Tas (Gautamas) A'isa Bhaagivaanaa
SyeTha Svandat Tu Rupeetha Dhaarmavanaa
Muni Sund Roopp Indran Dormut Oas
Ahalyayi Bhaas Tamath Gautam Suind Goas

There is a twist seen in the character of Indra, who is a fallen personality with malign attributes with moral impurity, to chase the chaste woman like Ahalya, who is considered as the most devoted towards her husband. The irony of fate for her starts. (Even today Ahalya is revered one among the Pancha Kanyas)

Shri Ram, is revered as the Adarsha Santana--an ideal son. The poet guides the modern youth to be the Adarsha Santan like Shri Rama, giving preference to the Word of father rather seeking his crown, as granted by Dashratha.



He says”

Su Santana Bhagyavan Van Kuoot Aasi

Yamis Mata Pita Bhagawan Basi

Dayas Pooza Pyeta Sunz Pooz Chhay Tas

Karaan Seewa Chhu M'aiolis Maaji Santan

The poet puts the son in great esteem, through these words. This is a definition of an ideal son, like Shri Rama.

Here, starts the sociology of religion, which is distinguished from the philosophy of Dharma. It does not set out to assess the validity of religious beliefs, though the process of comparing multiple conflicting dogmas in the mind of Gautama. From stone to Divinity is the inner massage of the Ramayana, through the blessings of Shi Rama.

Sita Haran, as depicted by the poet 'Premi Ji' is the irony of fate .after being taken away forcibly by the wicked Ravana, the poet is very sensitive about this forceful abduction of the Mother Sita/ He says:

Acchav Sitayi Kotah Khoon Horuy

Karan A'is Ram Ram, Tami Paanm Moruy

Shri Rama and Sita suffered the biggest tragedy

Hanuman is being addressed as the Pavansuta--the son of the Wind Deity, or the Vayu Devata.

Hanuman Sita Samvad represents the applied Dharma of Hanuman

He says" O Mother!

Bu Chhus Shri Ram Sund Doot Savidan Roz

Bu Chhus Pay Kadni Aamut Yi Pazar Boz

Bu Soozus Ran Tsandran Toth Bhagwan

Ma Khots Mata Bu Chhus Santan Chonuy.

It is the perfect example of devotion and dedication.

After being Ravana killed by Shri Rama, the poet makes Mandodari say---Yi Kith PaiThya Dayi Sunde Ath Muud Ravun

Hupaa'iryaKari Laaf Velap

Chhu Pazi PaiThya Ram—

Shri Ram Panu Bhagwan

The Supernatural element is seen In the Agni Pariksha of Sita, theorists tend to acknowledge socio-cultural effects of the religious practice.

Sva Ai'sa Pazya Patha Neshpap jan Sita

Tithu Ada Naar Tsandanuk Zaalnu Aaw

Athi Andar Tsayi Sita Naar Nvon Draaw

Sva Sita Svarga Vastra walnu Aayi Kuutya

Sva Deevi Naar Manmz Gulzar Sapdyos

The chastity of woman hood has been established within the sacred fire, which traces its source from the Vedic Agni Sukta..

A number of methodologies are used in Religious Studies. Methodologies are interpretive models, that provide a structure for the analysis of the Bhartiya Darshana-- spirituality in the v philosophy of religion, as the basic source of religious studies in the Ramayana

This is evident from the concluding poem, a samaapti.

Premi Ji documents the Tithi as Poh Gat Pachh Dvayi -- Pausa Krishna Paksha Dvitiya of the Saptarshi Samvat as 5046,

Concludingly, Eastern philosophical traditions are generally spiritual in content, transcendental in nature and applied in the social behaviour generally being written by the scholars, who are believers. This is established by this monumental poetic description of an epic. Theology stands as a component to the philosophy of religion and religious studies in that,

The poet, here is first and foremost is a believer of the Sanatana Dharma, employing both logic and scripture as evidence. It happens to be a religious commitment to which he subscribes.

Lastly, I would like to add that the publisher gives an account that his father Pandit Sarvanand Premi finalized the proof of this Ramayana on January, 1990. He considers this an edition to the literary addition to Ramayana in Kashmiri language

BOOK REVIEW

"DOON AND OTHER STORIES" (Displacement And Identity)

Author	-	Rohini Vaishnavi
Published	-	Bigfoot06 Publications (OPC) Pvt. Ltd.
Year of Publication	-	December 2023
ISBN	-	978-81-968085-4-9
Price	-	250 (Available on Amazon)
Review by	-	Avtar Mota

Rohini Vaishnavi has done her Master's in Business Management from a prestigious European university. After that, she has been in various leadership roles in the corporate world for many years. And now she has founded a content creation and brand communication agency. She is a columnist in the Times of India Opinion. She has also edited "The Chronicles of Kashmir", a book by Bal Krishen Sanyasi, her father and a well-known Kashmiri poet. She belongs to the family of Pandit Amar Nath Vaishnavi, the well-known selfless leader of Kashmiri Pandits. She is directly connected with many Initiatives of Amar Nath Vaishnavi Foundation, a social organization working for the exiled Kashmiri Pandits.

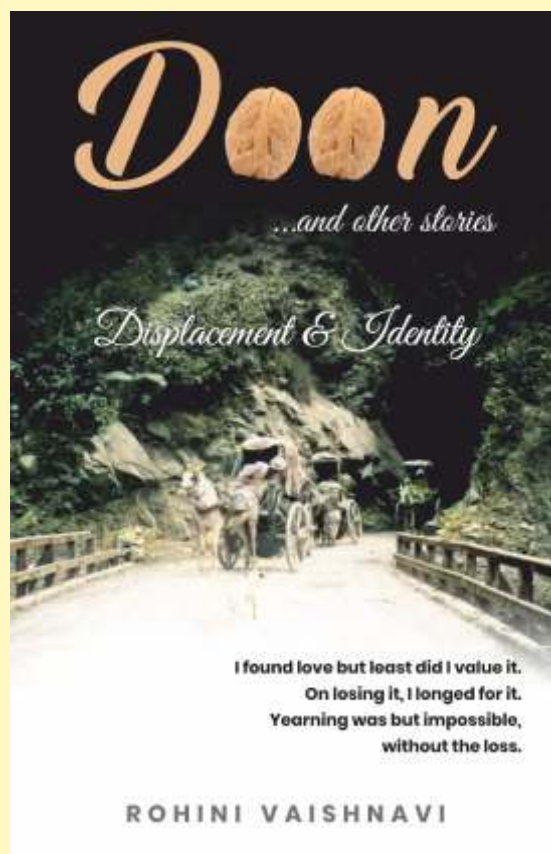
Dedicated to Somawati Vaishnavi (her grandmother), this 127-page book consists of 5 stories titled, Yusuf, The Bedside Lamp, It Was Destined, Doon and Shireen. In Her Introduction to the book, Rohini writes this :-

"I understood the role that geography plays in shaping individual and collective identity only after I had to leave my birthplace forever, never to return. Though this book is a work of fiction, I have drawn the emotions and situations from the lives of real people that I know of and some of it is my personal experience.

I salute the resilience of this miniscule community which bounced back and started life from a scratch after the Exodus and always had faith in India and its democracy."

The 'Short Story' technique gained great popularity in the world literature after the arrival of writers like Guy de Maupassant, Nikolay Gogol, Leo Tolstoy, Anton Chekhov and many more. Chekhov went ahead and broke the tradition of a well plotted-story. He was not interested in conveying dramatic happenings through his short stories though much is revealed about his characters and the quality of their lives. Unlike Maupassant, Chekhov focused on his characters using his perception, subtle humour and irony. The event was not important to him. He employed what is known as foreshadowing technique to convey human suffering, loss, helplessness, pathos and loneliness. His characters are breathtakingly relatable and lifelike. Unknowingly or knowingly, Rohini uses something like Anton Chekhov's technique to convey stories. Her stories revolve around intangible loss, struggle for survival, helplessness, suffering, relationships, loss of culture and loss of identity; the issues that the Kashmiri Pandits faced after being driven out from their motherland.

In the story Yusuf, Rohini uses Yusuf, a young boy to convey the loss of 'Ghar-Devta' for the Kashmiri Pandit exiles in the heat and dust of the plains of the country. Yusuf's parents buy the house of an exiled Kashmiri Pandit where young Yusuf finds a picture drawn by one Avinash in his notebook with a note on Ghar-Devta and his miracles. Innocent Yusuf believes that the Ghar-Devta would certainly help to save his ailing mother, Khadija. The story of Ghar-Devta is woven in a style that is profoundly relatable for the readers from the Kashmiri Pandit community. The story also recalls the greedy brokers who followed Pandit exiles in their tents



and camps and used all types of pressure forcing them to sell their property for peanuts.

Similarly in the story, 'The Bedside Lamp', Neena's longing to revisit her home in Kashmir results in her kidnapping. Shafi the captor, despite speaking the same language and being from a similar cultural background, fails to demonstrate human empathy and warmth. And Shafi (who is now the Area Commander of a terrorist group) was closely known to Neena's family during the days when peace prevailed in Kashmir. He was their neighbour. Finally, Neena walks to her freedom only after the sudden army crackdown that makes her captor run for life. Similarly in the story, 'It Was Destined' the reader finds a similar situation when a Kashmiri Pandit family revisit their house. When Sarita revisits her house, she finds everything changed. She recognises Majid, the new occupant of their house. Thirty years back, Majid, the truck driver had informed Sarita that her sister had been shot dead.

'Doon' is another story full of nostalgia, pathos and suffering. Doon or walnut is symbolic of Kashmiri culture. The walnut was a binding force in the composite culture of Kashmir especially during Shivratri festivity. In the story, Ashwini is a Bangaluru-based Kashmiri Pandit engineer whose mother died in a Jammu hospital of some unknown ailment in 1996, a time when Ashwini was completing his BE degree from a Pune college. Kashinath, his father lived a lonely life in one room in Jammu after the death of his wife. Kashinath's lonely life in the room brings back the painful memories of sufferings of every Kashmiri Pandit in Jammu after being thrown out from the valley. Kashinath goes to live with Ashwini (who has married Sunayna, a Kannad girl) in Bangluru and decides to celebrate Shivratri with walnuts the way he used to do when Shobha, his wife was alive. Sunayna cooperates happily. Sahil, Ashwini's son also gets connected to walnuts that he sees in California where he moves permanently after completing his education. Doon fascinates Kashinath, Ashwini and even Sahil who lives in California. Kashinath suffers from dementia and Sunayna is all happy to pass on the cultural importance of Doon to the German girl who is now Sahil's companion. The story is woven into incidents and situations that bring painful nostalgia and a profound sense of loss.

The last story is a moving tale of two young hearts, two lovers; Vikram and Shireen who face the sudden onset of brutal terrorism that changes the course of their lives and shatters all dreams. While reading the story, I was reminded of Sahir Ludhianavi's poem 'Parchhaiyaan' or Shadows. Sanjay and Raksha, common friends of Vikram and Shireen too are dumbfounded with this sudden change in the peaceful environment in the valley. The story is woven around the killing of Tika Lal Taploo, bomb blasts and kidnappings. The situation at that time was a clear signal to the Pandits and other minorities living in the valley. Allama Iqbal has summed up this situation in his poetry as under:-

*"Chhupa karaasteen mein bijliyaan rakhi hain garduun ne
Aanaadil bagh ke gaafil na baithen aashiyaanon mein
Wattan ki fikr kar nadaan museebat aanewaali hai
Teri barbaadiyon ke mashware hain aasmaanon mein."*

(The arched sphere has concealed lightning in its sleeve,
Let not the nightingales of the garden sit carefree in their nests,
Oh, the ignorant! Think of your homeland, the tragedy waits in wings,
Consultations for your destruction are being held in the skies.)

And then these characters live through the horrible night of 19th January, 1990. Thereafter, silence and suspicion become the way of life for Kashmiris that include Omkar Nath and Sheela, parents of Shireen. This was the period when neighbours turned strangers. A period when the season of exile had set in. Leaving everything behind, Kashmiri Pandits run to the plains of the country to save their lives and honour using every available mode of transport. Shireen was studying in Mumbai while whereabouts of Vikram's family were unknown. None knew where did they go and how they were. And Shireen kept looking for Vikram in the refugee camps, in the long queues to collect tap water, in the tattered tents and anywhere and everywhere.

The book invokes an intense feeling of collective loss and uprooting. These stories are also a great effort towards documenting what befell a peace-loving community. I have every reason to believe that such stories will be read as the 'history of the sufferings of a community' by posterity.

BOOK REVIEW

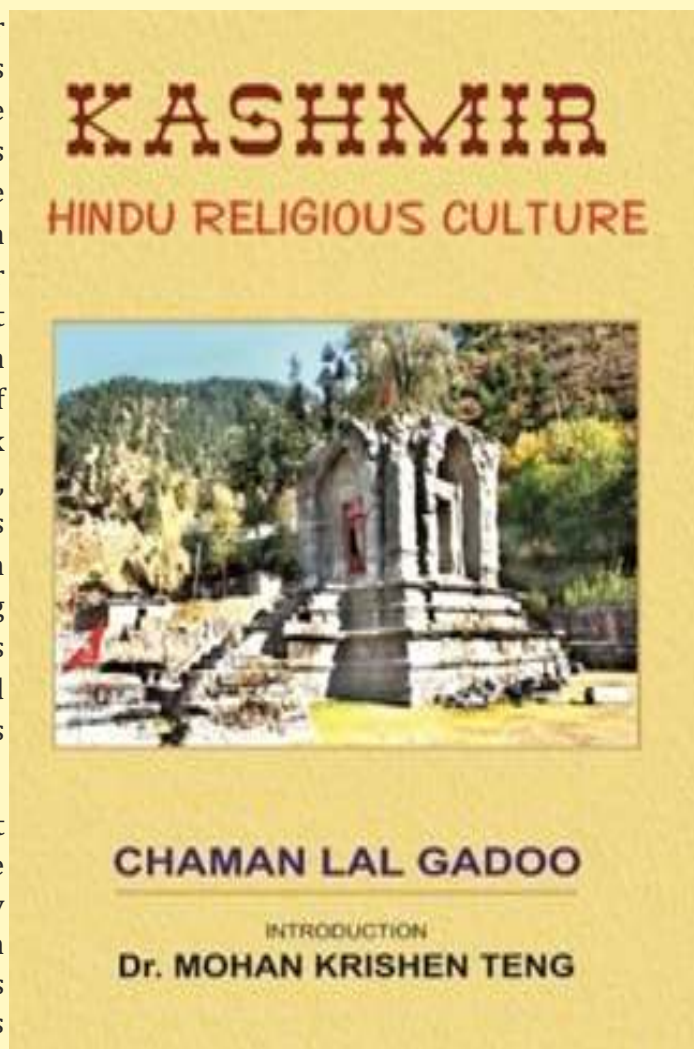
Kashmir : Hindu Religious Culture

PREFACE	-	INTRODUCTION	Dr. M. K. TENG
CHAPTER I	-	HISTORICAL BACKGROUND,	
CHAPTER II	-	HINDU RELIGIOUS CULTURE	
CHAPTER III	-	RELIGIOUS SHRINES AND TIRTHAS	
CHAPTER IV	-	MAHATMAYAS	
CHAPTER V	-	VEDIC TRADITION	
CHAPTER VI	-	MOTHER GODDESS BHAVANI	
CHAPTER VII	-	VAISHNAVISM	
CHAPTER VIII	-	SHAIVISM	
CHAPTER IX	-	RITUAL CULTURE	

**THE BOOK WITH 240 Pages and Rare Photographs,
ISBN 978-81-910057-1-4 Price: Rs. 300/-
Review by - Sh. Triloki Nath Dhar 'Kundan'**

I am grateful to Shri chaman Lal Gadoo ji for sending me his book, 'Kashmir Hindu Religious Culture'. I have read the book and found it to be very informative, elaborate and detailed. He has taken pains to dig deep into all sorts of literature available and then put it together to present a coherent picture of the glorious past of Kashmir and its original inhabitants. There is no doubt that Kashmir has been part and parcel of India culturally and religiously. Even the language of this area is an offshoot of Vedic Sanskrit. The book is a compendium of History, Philosophy, Mythology and Archaeology. The narrative has been developed in an organised manner with quotations from a wide range of sources including Nilmat Purana and the writings of various scholars. Dr, M.K.Teng has provided a detailed introduction to the Vedic and Sanskrit era of this land and its people.

The first two chapters give a detailed account of the historical and religious background of the culture of this place. The third chapter is very informative in as much as it provides a description of various temples, shrines and pilgrimage places together with their historical and religious



importance. The fourth chapter analyses the *Mahatamyas* of important shrines. The two chapters together, show how the people of this place have worshipped Shiva, Shakti, Vishnu and Aditya at different times and how the culture has evolved over the centuries. Thereafter three more chapters have been added describing in detail the worship of Bhawani, Shiva and Vishnu. In the last chapter the rituals of Kashmir have been enumerated and their background explained at length. There is a detailed account of Trika Philosophy of Kashmir, which is a rich contribution of our sages from Vasugupta to Abhinavgupta.

Shri Gadoo deserves accolades for choosing this subject and writing this book, which will prove an asset for any serious reader of our cultural heritage. I would only suggest that in the second edition a thorough proof reading would remove many errors that have crept in this edition. For example '*Vishishta-advaita*' has to be translated as qualified monism. Mistakes in the names of sages like Gaudpada, Madhvacharya and in the names of incarnations like Vamana, Parashurama need to be rectified. The book is full of illustrations, photographs and plates, which has made this volume attractive and added to its richness. By reading this book one can easily understand the amount of labour put in by Shri Gadoo and the resilience shown in collecting the material, marshalling it and then putting it in various chapters in an orderly manner. The author has very successfully removed the wrong impressions and misleading conclusions created by some biased writers about the past religious and cultural history of this land. There have been attempts by such writers to separate this holy place from the rest of India. This book has rightly established that it has been part and parcel of Indian sub-continent both culturally and religiously.

The language of Kashmir has its roots in Vedic Sanskrit, the religious practices and rituals are based on the Vedic tradition and the pattern of worship and propitiation is no different from that found in this vast land called Aryavarta. This is very elaborately brought out in this well written compendium with the help of a detailed description of the temples and shrines and the rituals observed by the Kashmiri Pandits. The book has a detailed account of the religious tradition of the land worshipping the Divine in all the forms of Shiva, Vishnu, Shakti as also propitiating the Sun, the Agni and other symbols of the Divine. The author has given the names of a host of writers and scholars in his introduction, whose books he has consulted in order to collect the material for this book. This shows the amount of labour he has put in in order to have access to the historical, religious, ritualistic and philosophic literature relevant to the topics of this book. It is no joke to put these details together to paint a picture of the traditional rich heritage of Kashmir, which due to the historical reasons has lost its place of pride in the annals of this vast country. Kashmiris will feel proud to read this detailed account of their own glorious past and non-Kashmiris will see this book as an informative piece of literature worth reading and preserving in their libraries.

Shri Gadoo has stated that this book is an attempt to explore the past and present of the Hindu religious culture of Kashmir in the context of the civilizational unity of India. He has more than succeeded in fulfilling this noble purpose. Students of History, Culture, Philosophy, Religion and Spirituality will find a lot of material collected in this book of their interest and they will get an insight into the past and present of Kashmir in these areas.



OUR PROGENY Budding Poet

Lies of Morality

With feet planted
On the carcass of the place
Where days passed
In a hazy daze
I watched myself grow
Again
Faster than I did before
Flying through time
Why
Couldn't I
Do the same anymore?
Click Clack
I pull myself together
Reminding myself to return back
From the trip in my head
At once
And for once
Just look around instead
It's full of life
But, not the same
Letters to each house
Are written for a different name
And I put the former to blame
I'm fooling my heart again
It's petty I know
I'm feeding it lies
Just another placebo
....
I promise it's the last
... Maybe.
One of the last I'll say.



- Kirti Bhat

*Graduate Student , Enginerring
College Patiala, Zirakpur Mohali*

....
Nevermind why do I care?
I turn my back
And walk fast
Straight ahead
To anywhere
It's more comforting
For my heart in my head
To think I fell for the place
And not the memories here
My feet keep walking
They don't want to stay
On this carcass of a place
Anymore
This is the last time you'll find me here
I swear
....Maybe.
One of the last I'll say

OUR PROGENY Budding Poet

Don't know why it rhymes with pain
because it is one the most glorious
things
that gives me joy
like a child playing with her
favourite toy.

When these raindrops touch my face
everything seems so unnatural
even though for some people
it is pretty normal.

I am a socially awkward person
but when the rainfall starts,
the desire to sing on the roads
never lasts.

Rain gives me peace
rain gives me relief
rain is the cure
of my unknown disease.

So when someone says that
they don't like rain
I get quite confused
because of me
the rain has always
been my muse.

Rain



- Sanvi kaw

A student of class 12th Ryan international school, mayur vihar phase 3. I am an enthusiastic and a creative person. My hobbies are sketching, singing, writing and dancing.



OUR PROGENY

Budding Poet

The Moon, Sea and Every piece of Me.

The moon shines over the sea.
Like the crown of mystery.
Somewhere far back in history.
Like the taste of pleasure.
Like the breath of silence.
Like no love in pressure.
And no happiness in measure.
Like the whisper of a sweet soul.
In the mysteries of night, in the mysteries of nature.

The moon shines over the sea.
Like the only light on my Christmas tree.
Above the dreamy sea.
Pretending to recite a mystery.
Of the ones who loved and loved like no one else did.
Their names, yes, embedded in history.

I hear of those, though.
Whose paths were never meant to meet.
Their souls, dancing on every beat.
The beat of their heart, of longing and of hope.
The hope, in their gleaming eyes.
As they look up, with an attempt to forget their misery.
All they see is, the very narrator of the mystery.
The moon that shines over the sea.

The Moon



- **Plaksha Shali**
Class 10th

*BlueBells International School,
Kailash Colony, Delhi*



OUR PROGENY

Budding Artist



Advik Sharma
Class : 10th
School name: GD Goenka,
New Delhi



Ayaan Kaul
Class: 7th
School name : DPS R K Puram,
Delhi



OUR PROGENY

Budding Artist



Aarav Raina
Class - VIII
Presidium School,
Indrapuram



OUR PROGENY

Budding Artist



Chahel Rayu
Class : 8th
School name : Sri
Venkateshwara School,
Delhi



Kavesh Raina
Class: 8th
School name : Amity
International School Noida



OUR PROGENY

Budding Artist



Vansh Kaul
Class : 4th
School name : DPS R K
Puram, Delhi



As a student of philosophy, I believe that being open to diverse perspectives is the key to diving into the depths of this discipline only to rise to the pinnacle of knowledge. When I study my philosophical texts, I prefer not to identify myself by my societal designations such as gender, religion, race etc. I am an individual open to new ideas and different perspectives of the same story. Inquisitiveness and the lack of a stringent ideology come to my rescue when I encounter conflicting ideologies of multiple philosophers, each one having a validity in their claim, given the situations and circumstances. When specializing in such a subject, you are challenged to your very core about every intricate detail that comprises this universe. This forces you out of your comfort zone and into an unfamiliar stance.

Seeing my mother Rohini Vaishnavi constantly plunging into unknown and evolving thereof, only to learn something new every time has inspired me always and enabled me to possess this attitude.

Navsheen Reddy is daughter of Raghu Reddy and Rohini Vaishnavi.



Navsheen Reddy



منج کامنا

روشن لال روشن

پہ چھس سکھر تھہ تہ چھم تیاری نے زان بر شہجے تہ کرسو آری
 پیارک ونہ ہم تہ بھیر تیاری شو و شو وہم شوے ژو پاری
 پاتال پر جھوی، گنگن تہ چائی

منج تہ کامنا شوونے چائی

گڑہست زاس بزم تہ زائتھ زگت تہ بزم تی چھس پہ مانتھ
 نہ دُشمنے کاہہ نہ دوس زائتھ نہ غار کاہہ نے بئن تہ مانتھ

صرف گوہان بس تہ بر آکر چائی

منج تہ کامنا شوونے چائی

مہہ چھس چھم دیکھ بڑ رمت اہنکار نے دروت دتھت
 لکھہ ساگرہ جھڑا کر گومت کرو دھ پارے نے سور سہد مت

ٹہہ چہ کھسہ وسہ چھز پر چائی

منج تہ کامنا شوونے چائی

چھز پر زنگو تہ زیر چانے پکان، ڈلان یوز تہ مان مانے
 کیا چھہ لکھتھ تمن تہ لانے خال کا شوہا تہ زانہ مانے

اگیا نہ گتہ تم توے بھسانی

منج تہ کامنا شوونے چائی

ژے چھے پدہن تل تہ برک پر پرزلان نرا کر چھم ناسا کار باسان
 روشن بے کھہ تہ آزماوان سواے نماہ شوے کئی نہ زانان

پڑھہ مہلیس تہ کامرائی

منج تہ کامنا شوونے چائی

منوچ کامنا

روشان لال 'روشان'

بھو چھس سخریث تھو چھم تہ یورے مے جنان برہم تھو کر سارورے
 یپاروی ونوہام تھو فیر تہ پورے شيوو شيووہم شيوو چھپورے
 پاتال پرثوی گان تھو چوئی
 منوچ مے کامنا شيوو تھو چوئی ۱۱
 گرہست جلالس برہم تھو چوئی نیتھ جگتھ تھو برہم تھو چھس بھو مائیتھ
 ن دوشمانوچ کاہہ ن دوست چوئی ن گور کاہہ چھم پنون تھو چوئی نیتھ
 سیریف گھان چھم تھو برتھو چوئی
 منوچ مے کامنا شيوو تھو چوئی ۱۱
 مھو پھین چھم تھو دے گی بوسموت اہنکارس تھو دوتھو دھوتموت
 لھو ساگر چھو سوسھو گوتم کھو ناروچ چھو سورھ سپودموت

شھ چھو خسوس چھو چوئی

منوچ مے کامنا شيوو تھو چوئی ۱۱

چھو چوئی جگتھو تھو چھو چھو پکان ڈلان تھو مان مانے
 کھو چھو لیکھتھ تھو تھو خال کا چھو تھو چھو چھو چھو
 اگیا تھو گتھ تھو برہم تھو
 منوچ مے کامنا شيوو تھو چوئی ۱۱

چھو چھو پھن تھو سیریف آسان مے چھو نیراکار ساکار باسان
 روشن یھو کھو تھو آچھو مان سیریف نھو: شیریف کھو نھو چھو
 چھو چھو مھو تھو کامرائی
 منوچ مے کامنا شيوو تھو چوئی ۱۱



रिकू कौल

हांछ

अज गँयि अलु पलु शे र्यथ बनसी लालस गरि नेबर नेरनसुय । नेरिहे ति कमि बुधि, सु यथ गुरिस सवार ओस, तथ आयस लाकम छेनिथ तु गोस गुमंडस सूर । सु ओस अकसर बाकियन टॉनु करान तु अज येलि पानसुय वुन्योस, करिहे क्याह, नारस दिया नरि तु कमि बुधि यियि तिमन सारिनुय ब्रॉहकुन यिमन तँम्य पपर ऑस्य जॉल्यमत्य ।

अज ओस कारटु किस बेंचस प्यठ बिहिथ नेचिव्य सुंदि तलाकुक ऑखरी फॉसलु बोज़नि आमुत । सॉरी ऑस जज सॉबनिस इंतिज़ारस तु बनसी लाल वोथ पनुनिस जॉन्य यारस तेज कृष्णस कुन, युस तसुंद वेंकील ति ओस:

‘हे तेज कृष्णा ! खांदरस मंज़ क्वसु कमी थँवुम । सु कुस नु चीज़ युस नु मे खांदरुच शूब तु पनुन्य शान बडावनु बापथ वाफिर ओस थोवमुत । हरगाह हे मे पिलुहे, ब अननावुहा येंद्राज़नि दरबारचि अफसरायि ति यो नचनि बापथ । अदु वुनि ति छिम लुख वुगरायन यिवान । राथुय हसा ओसुम वीडयो वोल वुगरायि आमुत, तस वुछिथुय गौंडुन शोटस नार तु यि गोछुस ति द्युतमस सिरिफ थोवमस अथु शलक पर । अदु सु ति द्राव दुहि लद गगुर ह्युव तु चीं ति फ्यूरुस नु । असा सु बिचारु ति छु पनुनिस जायि ठीक, मगर अँम्यसुय निकुन द्रुय छम येलि ति मे तथ एलबम किस मलुवरकस कुन नज़र छेय पेवान, ज़चि च़टनस छुस वातान, दपान छुस याशाह कॅरिथ दिमुहय नार या त्रावुहा तवि । मगर तितु छुस नु ह्यकन कॅरिथ तिक्व्याज़ि अथ मंज़ छिम कुन्य अँछ हंदि गाशु लालुन्य मॉर्य मँद्य फोटू । मगर यिमन फोटूहन ति रूज़ नु व्वन्य कांह वुकत । न पलवन, न तिमन नाज़ नखरन तु न तिमन शकलनुय यिम अथ मंज़ काँद छे गॉमचु ।

हे यार ! वॉलिंज हसॉ छम फटनस आमुच । मँज़्य ज़नति छुस यॉगी गछान तु अदु मतु प्रुछतम पानस ताम छुम नु किहीं रोज़ान । रोज़्यम ति किथु कँन्य, यिमन

अथन वुनि ति माँज़ छे लॉगिथ तिमनुय आयि रब मथनु । यि खांदर ओसुम बडु चिकु चावु सान कोरमुत । केंछा खानु मॉल्य सुंदि बापथ तु केंछा लुकु व्यवहॉत्र । मगर सोरुय हा गव क्वलि । तेज कृष्णा ! नोकसानुक छुम नु कांह ति गम, मगर बु कतिम बुधि वनु लुकन ज़ि तलाक क्याज़ि सपुद । बलाय आयि शोठु सुंदिस मिज़ाज़स युस अकसर लुकन खामखाह गीलान तु टॉनु ओस करान । बलायन छिनु हेंग आसान ! अदु खबर छा तिहुंदी दिल हँदरॉविथ मा प्योम यि दोह डेंशुन । हता सु कुस अखाह करिहे सुंह गोंछि म्यूठ ज़ि मे सुत्य करिहे वाद वाद । बु हा ओसुस कथन कुठ कडान तु तिमन दम फॉट्य करान । मे कति ऑस पय ज़ि म्यव कुलिस छु ऑखुर पनुनुय म्यव फुटरावान तु ज़मीनस सुत्य मेलुनावान, मगर बु आस नु सिरिफ मेलुनावनुय योत बॅल्कि आयम रब ति मथनु । मथ छु गछान तवि लायि हा व्वठ, येमि सुत्य न पेयि हेम काँसि हुंघन सवालन जवाब द्युन तु न यि शरमंदगी हुय महसूस करुन्य ।’

‘बनसी लाला, क्याह छुख वनान, दिल थव डंजि । ग्वडु पुशाराव दयस तु पतु मे प्यठ । वुछ आंचन हेमख हिसाब । बस चु हे सबरस कॉम तु मँ सोंच अथ कैसस मुतलिक, सु त्राव चु मे प्यठ, चु सोंच सिरिफ बाबी जी हुंद । तस बिचारि प्यठ क्याह आसि गुदरान । ऑखुर तस ति यिम शोक ऑस्य तिम ज़न नीयस हरदु वावन पानस सुत्य डुविथ तु गॅयख पनु चुनि । अज़ छु येमि कैसुक ऑखरी तॉरीख तु बु छुस पुर व्वमेद ज़ि अँज्य गछि फॉसलु ति ।’ तेज कृष्णन द्युतुस दिलास ।

‘दयस यि करुस ओस ति कोरुन, व्वन्य छम यि कैस च़ेय पुशरोवमुत । नतु वनतु दोशवुय ऑस यकजा ट्रेनिंग करान तु पतु कोरुख खांदर करनुक फॉसलु ति पानय । पॅत्यम्यव दॅहव वॅर्ययव प्यठु ऑस्य अख अँकिस ज़ानान । मे ति दोप, असि छनु भगवानन कुनि ति चीज़च वेछय थॅवमुच । फक्त ऑस अख नेक कूर ज़रूरथ । अदु सु कुस नु चीज़ युस नु मे तु अखतुय असुंद्य मॉल्य ओस यिमन वाफिर थोवमुत, मगर अँम्य योसु हांछ असि खॉर, तमि सुत्य युस दाग सॉनिस खानु मॉलिस लोग, सु ना च़लि ज़ांह तिक्याज़ि द्राग छु च़लान मगर दाग न ।’

