

Neel Nag

Volume : 7

April-June 2007



अव्यक्तस्तु परः पुरुषो व्यापकोऽलिङ्ग एव च ।
यं ज्ञात्वा मुच्यते जन्तुरमृतत्वं च गच्छति



Nestlé

With Best Compliments From :-

Neel Nag

A quarterly publication of Kashyap Kashmir Sabha, Gurgaon

Volume : 7

April - June 2007

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EDITORIAL

On this occasion of our continued seventh volume publication of Neel Nag, I take an opportunity to share with my brethren that this magazine is to communicate the voice of our community to masses and needs absolute attention from our readers to contribute with articles, poems, news, achievements & advertisements to voice our feelings, thoughts, opinions & discussions which normally we share with a small group of community and actually is limited to a small aura. Our efforts shall make this a true voice of our community by our true & original literary contributions.

There has been an overwhelming response for KKS lifetime membership from our community members living out & spreading across Gurgaon locals. These members not only form a group of senior members but young people also have shown tremendous interest towards contributing in community service and therefore have become members to demonstrate their commitment for the cause. KKS feels proud to accept this gesture of adding up to the light.

The progress being made by KKS during last quarter has been commendable. KKS is spearheading many projects like temple & community hall construction, design of comprehensive Gurgaon Kashmiri directory, development of KKS official website and other initiatives to showcase Karshimiri culture & ethos through events & cultural programmes.

This publication comprises articles written by our community leaders & authors of repute with more emphasis on religion & spirituality. Our last publication was appreciated by many across the globe. I feel elevated to share that KKS has received lots of mails from our dear readers from Jammu, Bangalore, U.S.A, Indore & Pune. This calls for more responsibility & accountability of the team working on this initiative. We all must participate in making community aware through this medium on various subjects like Health, Yoga, Food, Politics, News, Kashmiri culture & heritage et al.

This publication is also featuring our young achievers, who have scored highest with their sheer talent & ability demonstrating excellence. We appreciate their efforts & wish them all the luck in their academic career.

I, once again through this medium, request our readers to contribute to take this literary work forward in making our community enlightened with sheer knowledge.

Wishing you a great time ahead with good health & stress-free life,

Anjana Dhar

PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

Dear Friends,

Namaskar,

The last year for KKS was a year of events & happenings and I am personally thankful to all biradari members for their kind participation in various activities & especially to the group of volunteers, who selflessly contributed towards success of KKS as a non-profit organization.

This is to reiterate that sole aim of KKS is to contribute in retaining dignity & identity of our community in this politically corrupt administration through absolute involvement in uplifting our weaker section of society, create a platform for equal justice & a forum for all to contribute in their little way. Our sabha is patiently trying to consolidate & manage various aspects of community welfare through different programmes & activities such as redrafting directory covering entire areas inhabitant by Kashmiri Pandits in Gurgaon, website development dedicated to KKS Gurgaon, organizing events for the welfare of humanity, acquisition of land for construction of temple & community centre for community use, building groups to lead specific tasks leading to empowerment of community, disbursement of scholarships and extending a courteous help to deprived section of society supporting their education or medical welfare.

In this quarterly issue (Volume 7) of Neel Nag, I wish to communicate to all members of KKS that their contribution in terms of donations, time & effort shall be appreciated & their valued contribution shall be used for community development. We can assure you that our focus shall not deter towards community development and this is possible if each one of you come forward & help the cause in a bigger way.

I am sure that your feedback, suggestions & healthy criticism will help our Sabha to evolve as a large service organization in fulfilling the desired objectives of overall community development.

M.K.Kitchloo

HARAMUKH AND GANGABAL, A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

M. ASHRAF SUGGESTS ADVENTURE LOVERS TO TAKE THIS TREK AND ENJOY

The most enchanting high altitude trek in entire Kashmir valley is the one leading to the famous Lake of Gangabal situated at the foot of Mount Haramukh. This Lake is approachable either from Sonamarg involving a 3 to 4 day trek or directly through Chatargul along Bramahsar or via Naranag up the steep slope of Buth-Sher which takes a day or two. The trek from Sonamarg across Nichnai pass is out of this world. There are more than a dozen Lakes on this trek. Kishensar, Vishensar, Yemsar, Gadsar, Satsar, and finally the Gangabal and Nundkol Lakes. After crossing Nichnai pass, one can either go through the valleys or cross some more passes to go along the Lakes directly. Each Lake has its own peculiarity and the bigger ones, Kishensar, Vishensar, Gangabal, and Nundkol are stocked with trout fish. There are excellent camping sites all along the trek. The mountainsides are full of varied flora. Some places one finds mind boggling variety of plants and flowers especially while climbing the pass near Gadsar to reach Satsar. First time I went on this trek in 1970 as part of a team from the Jammu & Kashmir Mountaineering & Hiking Club. At that time the trek was still more or less unknown. One of the members who is a botanist was stunned to see the variety of plants and flowers on different mountain spurs. The

atmosphere was absolutely clean and pure and the entire trek was serene and calm, extremely soothing to the nerves. Subsequently this became the most frequented trek for foreign tourists. Once an American tourist who had undertaken the trek remarked, "I have been living in New York for 30 years and it was first time on the Gangabal trek I saw how Sun rises and sets!" In fact I too was bitten by the mountain bug after undertaking this most lovely trek in this part of the world. After that first visit I had the opportunity of going there a number of times both in winter as well as in summer and that too in a helicopter. Each time I found the place very satisfying and soothing. It had some sort of a spiritual aura and rejuvenation qualities. After the eruption of turmoil in 1990, the trek was closed for mountain lovers as it became a popular trail for ex-filtration and infiltration. Ironically as mentioned by Kalhana in Rajatarangini, the trail had been used in ancient times by many Kashmiri rebels including famous King Bhoja to take shelter in Dard area of Gurez and Tilel. The Gangabal trek has been the most sacred pilgrimage of Kashmiri Hindus since ancient times. Sir Aurel Stein, the translator of Rajatarangini, in his Memoir on the Ancient Geography of Kashmir has given the most absorbing historical perspective of Haramukh and

Gangabal. The relevant passages reproduced here make very fascinating reading, "To the east of Dud-Khut Pass the summits of the range gradually rise higher and higher until we reach the great mountain-mass of Haramukh Peaks.

Rising to close on 17,000 feet and surrounded by glaciers of considerable size these peaks dominate the view towards the north from a great part of the Kasmir Valley. Sacred legends have clustered around them from the early times, and the lakes below their glaciers belong still to the holiest of Kasmirian Tirthas. The ancient name of the Peaks is HARAMUKUTA, "S'iva's diadem". This is explained by a legend which is related at length in the Haracaritacintamani. Their height is supposed to be S'iva's favourite residence. Hence, Kasmirian tradition stoutly maintains that human feet cannot reach the Peaks' summit." Stein relates an interesting episode about his climb to the Haramukh Peaks. He says that owing to this superstition he had great difficulty in inducing his Muslim Kasmirian coolies to accompany him on the ascent he made during his visit in 1894. On his telling his Brahman friends that he had reached the summit, they told him that his having reached a summit was a sufficient proof that it was not Haramukuta. An argument as simple as incontrovertible to the orthodox mind! A couple of teams from our Club climbed the summit in seventies and eighties. The team members did relate about getting confused on reaching the

top. There are many similar summits and it is difficult to tell which one is the real top? Stein narrating the story of these Peaks further states, "The lake which lies at the foot of the north-eastern glacier, at a level of over 13,000 feet, is looked upon as the true source of Kasmir Ganga or Sind River, and is hence known as UTTARAGANGA, or popularly Gangabal. It is the final goal of the great "Haramukutaganga" pilgrimage which takes place annually in the month of Bhadrapada and is attended by thousands of pilgrims. The bones of those who have died during the year, are on that occasion deposited in the sacred waters. A short distance below this lake is another also fed by a glacier, and now known as Nundkol. Its old name, KALODAKA, or Nandisaras, is derived from a legend which makes the lake the joint habitation of both Kala, i.e. S'iva, and of his faithful attendant Nandin. From the latter the whole collection of sacred sites takes the name of NANDIKSETRA by which Kalhana usually designates it." The final stage of the Haramukutaganga pilgrimage is the Naran Nag spring with a temple complex. There used to be seventeen temples of various ages and dimensions here which had been built by different Kings of ancient Kashmir from time to time in honour of S'iva who according to legend, had taken residence here as Bhutesa. The pilgrim route comes down a very steep spur which is even now known as Bhut-Sher. There used to be some more temples along the spur but these are now hidden under thick vegetation. The worship of S'iva

Bhutesa, “the lord of the beings”, localized near the sacred sites of Mount Haramukuta, has played an important part in the ancient religion of Kashmir. According to Kalhana, the earlier name of Naran Nag spring has been the Tirtha of Sodara which is mentioned in Nilmatpurana wherein ablutions are recommended to pilgrims visiting the Tirthas of Bhutesvara, Jyesthesa, and Nandin. Stein describes the Bhutesa as, “In the valley of the Kanknai stream, Skr.Kanakavahini, which issues from these lakes, there lies the sacred site of S’iva-Bhutesvara, now Buth’ser. It is closely connected with the legends of Mount Haramukuta, and often mentioned in the Rajatarangini. A series of interesting temple ruins marks the importance of this Tirtha and that of the ancient Jyesthesvara shrine which immediately adjoins it. Bhutesvara is passed by the pilgrims on their way back from the sacred lakes, while on their way up they reach the latter by another route, passing the high ridge as BHARATAGIRI and the smaller lake of BRAHMASARAS.” It seems that in modern times this holiest of the holy Tirthas has been completely forgotten and the Pilgrimage has been totally abandoned. It has suffered the same fate as the sacred Shrine of Sarada. One of the causes of losing one’s identity is the

abandoning the study of history which has unfortunately happened in Kashmir during last half century or so. During the first tenure of Sheikh Abdullah, study of Kashmir history as well as Kashmiri language had been introduced as part of the curriculum but after his deposition in 1953 it was completely abandoned. To understand one’s present one has to delve in the past. The sooner it is done, better it would be for our future generations who are feeling depressed and lost because of the lack of knowledge about the glorious past we have had. It is something which one needs psychologically to hold on to and have faith in regaining someday. Nevertheless, undertaking this trek after knowing its historical background is indeed a rewarding and a fascinating experience. It is hoped that more and more of our young boys and girls will not only study the history but someday undertake this spiritually rewarding adventurous trek!

(The author is the former Director General Tourism, J& K, and the President of the J & K Mountaineering & Hiking Club. He can be mailed at: ashrafmjk@gmail.com)

*If you have built castles in the air, your work need not be lost;
that is where they should be. Now put foundations under them.*

Henry David Thoreau

Pandits: A moment of introspection

By K.N. Pandita

I have been in the thick of our community's struggle with destiny for a long time but more so since our exile in 1990. I have traveled the globe more than once conveying the poignant saga of our suffering to international community.

Much has happened and much is happening now. I often recall to my mind what we have gone through and where destiny is driving us as a community, as a family and as individuals. On the basis of my knowledge, experience and intuition I can visualize what possibly should be the future shape of our community. I want to share it with my community members.

After great introspection and cool thinking I have decided to speak to you what is in my mind. It will disappoint many of my friends and colleagues with whom I have closely worked during past three decades. It pains me also. But if I do not say it now, I shall prove untrue to my conscience. History will not spare me.

The return of the community to Kashmir is out of question. For the first time in a thousand years, we have breathed the air of freedom outside the mountain-curtained valley of Kashmir: we have wriggled out of the prison house of discrimination, suppression and degradation: we have opened our wings for soaring into the skies and scaling the heights. This is a rare and unique opportunity for our future generations and for us. Let us seize it by our teeth.

We have come to the Indian plains with our centuries old ethos, good or bad whatever. We are essentially and historically the people given to intellectual exercise. Professionally we are circumspect. We are dismally inexperienced in economic, commercial, entrepreneurial and political spheres of life. Enterprise, initiative and innovation, the essential pre-requisites for a community's march onwards to prosperity have remained trampled under eight hundred years of brutal suppression by our adversaries.

It will take us some time to come out of that syndrome and look around for these and other new avenues, especially business, managerial and military services.

Therefore in the first phase of our life in exile, our youth will have to carry forward the customary profession in order to recover from and survive the onslaught we had to face so suddenly if not unexpectedly. The next generation will move away professionally and hence also intellectually. It will look for space horizontal as well as vertical. That will be the harbinger of a new life and new era in our history. In this period, most of our chosen intellectual youth should and will be drawn to professions of excellence with innovative urges. A small section from our top intellectual segment should be able to gatecrash the Indian administrative juggernaut and barge into the corridors of bureaucratic power - structures of the country. Some of our youth bestowed by nature with leadership quality and

linguistic skills should be able to make room for themselves in active politics of contemporary India . Many of them will find entry into financial organizations and mass media structures of the country and our emerging entrepreneurs will become components of its commercial and economic machine.

Thus by next two or three decades, the community will have put under wrap its saga of exile and exodus: it will have overcome the nightmare of discrimination and suppression. This community cannot escape the ordained role of becoming frontline planners and builders of new India.

But this is not the end of our struggle. Once the inherent potential of dynamism is unleashed, the community will look beyond the shores and climes. Our advance columns have already set their feet on foreign lands. We need to create an urge and a burning desire in our youth to transcend geographical boundaries or the constraints on freedom of movement. No land is foreign to us, no territory is forbidden to us, especially the developed world. On the Indian soil, we may have hurdles in maintaining our identity, but on a foreign soil, all necessary conditions are available to create, perpetuate and propagate our true identity. This is because we have all the requisite qualifications to make us the true citizen of the world. We are the globalized community in an era of globalization. These traits in our character need to be exploited adequately.

It is futile to waste our time and energy in running after the Indian political class for the amelioration of our condition as it is today. We are nobody's vote bank because we are numerically insignificant —

a non-entity — and economically bankrupt. Therefore, for them we are a liability, a stinking lot. Being a pariah no political group in this country would own us, adopt whatever modus of servitude we may.

The Indian media considers it a sin to talk a word about us except in negative terms. The saffronites exploit us, the khadiites despise us, and the reds club us with the bourgeoisie.

We ask for Homeland — a proposition more in the broader interests of the Indian nation state than in ours as an ethnic group: we ask for representation in conflict resolution dialogue as victimized people: we ask for representation as a minority: we ask for representation in power sharing, law making and nation building mechanisms. Does it mean anything with those holding the reins of power? Does the presence of a miniscule non-Muslim entity in a predominantly Muslim and radically Islamized society mean anything? Don't we see and understand that a "secular democratic" Indian Union has not only literally but practically accepted a non-secular, Islamized Kashmir as its now much fragile "inseparable part", provides frugal funding for the perpetuation of a mini – Pakistan at home, and, in the process, pockets tons of humiliation hurled into its face by the beneficiaries of its largesse? Which of India 's political parties is secular or democratic in the context of the situation of our community?

Therefore, our reasonable demands like 'homeland', 'representation' etc. ironically makes us jokers not only in the eyes of the stalwarts of Kashmir fundamentalism-terrorism but also in the eyes of the Sultans

of Delhi. I no more want to mislead my community members. I no more want them to be the daydreamers. It is not at all ‘*maej Kasheer*’ (Mother Kashmir) for us. Kashmir , as the Srinagar-New Delhi camaraderie plan, is the other name of ignominy and servility for us. Let us come out of a great deceptive notion.

A thousand years - old servility has broken our spirit. Even in exile, where our tormentors may not reach us, we remain servile to powerless and faceless gods. If our gods and goddesses had any power, they would have defended themselves. They could not. They have never had power except that of mesmerizing us and intoxicating us with utter servility, slavish mentality and Buddhist escapism. Let me be frank and forthright. A new pattern of the hangover of that servitude is visible in the behaviour of the community in exile. In Jammu in particular where we have a concentration, enormous money is wasted in the building of ashrams, shrines and institutions after this or that person giving them the new epithet of “bubs”. One wonders why we are going along a regressive and not a progressive path. Why don’t we build technical schools, polyclinics, craft centres, nursing schools and homes, computer learning centres, institutions for preparing students for professional and competitive exams, gyms, play grounds, indoor games studios and the like? What are these ashrams going to do for the destitute community? Remember not gods and goddess, not mendicants, recluses and ‘bubs’ make the destiny of a people. It is the wise, the visionary, and the courageous leadership that shapes the destiny of a people. Worship not their name or their fame; worship the ideals they have set for us. The ideals mean dynamism, objectivity, and

pragmatism. Shaivism is fine; a subject for understanding and research but not for submerging our self in its placid waters.

We cannot move forward if we keep our womenfolk deprived of their share in new thinking. They are the foremost who need to be educated into a new process of thought and action. We need to engage them mentally in search for new vision and movement. They have to come out of the customary mindset and men folk need to play their honest part in that exercise.

Secondly, our womenfolk have to break the shackles that make them the slaves of the kitchen. It means they have to implement a changed agenda of food habits of the community members and the dress regime of their own class. Vegetable sandwiches must replace plateful of rice and the kitchens should close at 8 PM in the evening to allow time for our womenfolk to walk, read, discuss, medicate and introspect. More time has to be allotted to outdoor activity, physical exercise community life and social engagements. Our womenfolk will meet the first ray of liberation the day they say good-bye to the damned *sari* and the despicable *kameez* and *shalwar* (the legacy of the Pathan rule) as the common dress. As long as they remain bandaged in a seven-meter long obnoxious bundle of textile, they are tied down in fetters of slavery. Our womenfolk’s dress should be the same as is used by the Jewish women, viz. trousers and the top.. Keep your hands free to work, to move, to brandish and to hit a miscreant. You need not a *dupatta*. It enchains you. Throw it away into the garbage and then when you walk remember what Tagore told the Bengali women. “Look straight into the eyes of the people when you walk”. That gives you

power, confidence, boldness and individuality.

A word about the changing contours of culture is also needed. We hear loud murmur of erosion of our traditional culture. Many among us demonstrate despair on that count. The phenomenon has to be addressed in a realistic manner and not just as a matter of nostalgia. As our community has willingly or unwillingly come into interaction with wider Indian society, it is neither practicable nor sensible to create walls and quarantines to segregate our youth. That does not happen.

But, of course, what ought to be done is that each Pandit family should steal half an hour every week and impart broad outlines of our culture, mythology and history to the younger generation in the home in a manner to create in them a sense of belonging to a specific cultural stream. Three works must remain under the pillow of every well-meaning Pandit, namely The *Bhagvat Gita*, Kalhana's *Rajatarangini* (related by Stein) and Jagmohan's *My Frozen Turbulence in Kashmir*. Sustained lecturing could prove very useful. But then if notwithstanding that effort the youth are sucked into the vortex of larger Indian milieu, it has to be accepted as inevitable and not something to be despised or abhorred. That will cause serious harm to the creative faculty of our youth.

And about our mother tongue – Kashmiri, I must say it is not a developed language, and at the best it is a dialect. It has no literary potential unless you heavily draw upon Sanskrit or Persian lexicon both obsolete for our youth). It has no scientific script (the *Sharada* is irretrievable). Kashmiri is fast getting eroded among our

youth and let that happen without remorse. We are not loosing anything by loosing it. Instead, our younger generation should be exhorted to perfect English and without fail learn one or two European languages preferably French and German. I would even strongly recommend that our youth learn excellent Arabic to make a dent in the petrodollar Eldorado of the littoral states. No field should remain out of bounds for them. If they do that, new horizons will open for them.

Dear friends, we are not the only group to have suffered the loss of a home and the homeland. Human history is replete with this saga. Ours is not an exceptional case. Remember displacement is also a great boon, a virtue if we are able to make one out of it. It gives a new life; it brings new blood into veins; it rejuvenges and refreshes. Ask not for a path that is not strewn with thorns. Remember that refugees and migrants have created great civilizations in human history, civilizations along the course of the Nile, the Euphrates, the Tigris, the Oxus, the Danube, the Seine, the Indus, and the Ganges and lately on the Potomac. Diasporas have created new parameters of human culture. You have to unleash that hidden and dormant potential in you. Create a new world, a new civilization a new vision and you are at the top of the world. Only weak and battered people cry for the lost lands and climes.

To us the land where we set our foot is our homeland whether it is the orient or the occident, within the shores of the seas or beyond. (*The author is the former Director of the Centre of Central Asian Studies, Kashmir University*).

Website: www.world-citizenship.org/
(K.N. Pandita > Kashmir)

OUR ACHIEVERS

Jahnvi Dhar

Daughter of Dr. Pankaj Dhar and Dr. Swapna Dhar (House No. 1063, Sector-28, Faridabad, Haryana), presently posted in Hyderabad, scored 495 marks out of 500 in the CBSE 10th standard 2007 examination thus topping the list of candidates. She has scored three hundreds in Mathematics, Sanskrit and Social Studies and with a 96 in English and a 99 in Science and Technology, aggregating 99%.



For the family, it is a repeat of history, with her mother having topped amongst the female candidates in the All India CBSE exams held way back in 1982. The road to this day has been anything but straightforward. The sinuous track that has led her to the achievement of scoring well in the CBSE 2007, has been full of hard work and determination. Besides being a voracious reader, Jahnvi loves music, both vocal and instrumental. For onward studies, she is evaluating the two schools of DPS and Modern Vidya Niketan that will help to shape her career.

Manik Aima

Son of Dr Ashok Aima and Dr. Indu Aima (Palam Vihar, Gurgaon) has secured 93% Marks in CBSE Class XIIth. A student of Delhi Public School, R.K.Puram. He has secured 100 marks in Math, 96 in Computer, 92 in Physics and 85 in Chemistry and 90 in English.

Bharat Munshi

Student of DLF Public School, Sahibabad, Bharat Munshi has scored 98.6% marks getting Ist rank in NCR and North India and Second rank in All India in the Class X CBSE Exam.



[Based on TOI report]

Akshit Peer

Son of Shri Bharat Bushan Peer, Akshit has secured 95.6 percent marks in CBSE. He is a student of BCM Sr. Secondary School, Chandigarh Road, Ludhiana. His score in individual subjects is 98 in Mathematics; 97 in Science and Tech.; 96 in English; 94 in Social Science and 93 in Hindi.



Pamposh Thusoo

Daughter of Smt. Alka and Shri Ravinder Thusoo (Sector-29, Faridabad) has secured 92% marks in CBSE Class X. A student of Ryan International School, Sector-21, Faridabad, she gets 99 marks in Science & Tech.; 97 in Mathematics; 96 in Social Science; 93 in IT and 86 in English.



CONGRATULATIONS!

ARE KP'S REALLY AN INTELLIGENT RACE?

Compiled By: A.K. KAUL
(AHMEDABAD)

I think before going into the subject, one needs to know the definition of “intelligence” and who are the so called intelligent. One may probe the question in many different ways such as I.Q, ability to get rich faster, a big ownership, a political inheritance or having the capacity to think ahead of time. Even to be an opportunist of the highest order might lead us to think that the person is extraordinarily intelligent.

We sometimes think that Kashmiri Pandits have been traditionally worshippers of Sarasvati, therefore, into the knowledge circle, where everything is reasoned out threadbare. Unlike Baniyas or Vyshayas we are poor worshippers of money and wealth, though sometimes good education brings alongside a fair share of wealth. Kashmiri Pandits are mostly, what we call *kaarkun* Brahmins wedded to their different vocations as against the normal vocations of Pandits.

While making a documentary on the Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad, when it completed first 25 years of its existence, the issue was very much lying dormant in the back of my mind. Who are these the so called the

top 1% of the Indian intelligesia..? By IIM scales of judging, I was given to understand that one has to be from an English speaking, English educated background, an IIT degree, skillful enough to defend one's skin when into an argumentative mode. You need to have the capacity to listen with utmost attention to the deepest of details and a very sharp memory to bank upon.

I think the caste and creed don't matter very much in the game. I think 90% of ones intelligence comes from upbringing, hard work and one's capacity to withstand day to day pressures, besides a focused attention. Yes, to some extent genes also play some part, which mainly consists of the memory and the motherboard of your brain plus the processing power.

Laotse, the famous Chinese philosopher had this bit of advice for the people who are into knowledge game, “Knowledge is like canoeing against the current, if you stop rowing it recedes. So, knowledge cannot be taken for granted, it needs to be fed everyday and maintained. So, are we Kashmiri Pandits an intelligent race...

DEAR MEMBERS ON KP COMMUNITY

Piyaray Raina (Saddhak)*

Namaskar. It has been my endeavour to keep my community, especially younger generation informed about the religious background of our traditions through writings in journals ,on internet and publication of books. Lately I have realised that due to lack of knowledge about our religious philosophy, which is the basis of our traditions, people living in various diasporas have started following local traditions as a substitute for our various religious obligations . It is in this context that I felt the need to let our community know the uniqueness of our religious philosophy and traditions to judge how for we should accept local traditions as a substitute for our age old traditions.

Please go through the write up reproduced here under :

Why is there need to save our religious traditions?

Religious traditions include all the customs and beliefs that are received from generation to generation through literature, or by word of mouth. Some of these traditions shape their origin in the philosophical thought that has been the endeavor of several generations and yet some may have their roots in the event in the hoary past which has no bearing now. No one, however brilliant, or well informed, can come to such fullness of understanding as to safely

judge and dismiss the customs or intuitions of his society, for these are the wisdom of generations after centuries of experiment in the laboratory of history. The sanity of the group lies in the continuity of its traditions. To break sharply with the past is to court madness that may follow the shock of sudden blows or mutation.”

Will and Ariel Durant Lessons of History

Unlike western societies most of the Hindu traditions are linked with our religious beliefs. Thus, it is important to understand our religious philosophy and how our Kashmiri traditions are different from the rest of the country.

Our Religious Philosophy

Right from Vedic times Sanatana Dharma developed along two broad traditions known as Shaivism and Vaishnavism. The main outlines of these traditions are:

1) Both recognize Supreme Being as transcendental. While in Shaivism It is known as Parmshiva , Vaishnavites recognize It as Brahman (not to be confused with Brahma) Manifestation as per Shaivism takes place through the immanent aspect of Parmshiva called Shiv-Shakti where Shiv is passive witness to all that takes place under His orders but Shakti is the active principle

involved in the manifestation process . Shakti has been given the feminine form of Durga (with her many other forms). Vaishnavism also recognizes that manifestation takes place through the immanent aspect of Brahman called Ishvara or Hiranyagarbha (male form)

2) As per Shaivism, Durga in Her various forms takes care of the lives of humans(jivas) whereas in Vaishnavism trio of gods-Trimurti (Brahma, Vishnu and Mahash)have been recognized for creation of jives (Brahma), maintenance of life(Vishnu) and dissolution of life at the end of life cycles called epochs (Mahesh is also known as Shiva or Shanker) To take care of jivas on this planet Lord Vishnu takes birth as Avatar from time to time. Lord Rama, Lord Krishna are the two Avatars among the nine who have taken birth so far.

3)Both traditions agree that jivas are held in bondage in this world (samsara) due to their ignorance about their true relationship with Supreme Being caused by divine illusion (Maya) which is the cause of repeated births in this samsara . To get out of this cycle of misery one has to work for salvation (moksha). While Vaishnavites focus on carrying out rituals and offering prayers to Lord Vishnu and His Avatars, Shivites offer their ritualistic worship and prayers to Shiv –Shakti .Broadly speaking Shaivism is practiced in Kashmir, Bengal and South Indian States. Vaishnavism is the dominant faith in rest of India.

Our Unique traditions

As a result of our religious faith, geographical location and long history of about 5000 years our (Kashmiri) traditions have uniqueness. A few examples are given below:

1) Our family deities (Isht devas) are various forms of Durga (Ragnya, Sharika and Jwala ji) The Isht devtas of Vaishnavites are Lord Rama, Lord Krishna and other regional deities

2) Our recitations which we carry out on most of the occasions are mainly dedicated to our Isht devi and Her other forms. Most of these recitations are of local origin and are not recited by non-Kashmiri Hindus. (e.g. Bhavaninamashasra, Indrakshi, Panchastavi, Leele rbda etc ; Ganash Stuti -Hemja stum). Shiv Stuti like Shivmahimnapar which is universal has a local touch. We have 35 shlokas whereas out side Kashmir there are only 32 sholokas . And even among 32 we have 2 different sholakasd. The only prayer for Vishnu prevalent among Kashmiris i.e. Jai Narayan is also of local origin not recited by non-Kashmiris. Vaishnavites carry out recitations from Ramayana (e.g. Sunder kand, Hanuman Chalisa), Bhagwat and Devi stuties from Sunder Lahri of Adi Shankera

3) We start our pujas with doop dip puja which forms the pradhan bhagha (first step of any puja). This is our local tradition. Again Prepun which is extensively used by us at the time of

offering bhoga (Prasad) is purely a Kashmiri tradition .Again we celebrate our birthday with a puja dedicated to our 8 rishis . Non -Kashmiri Hindus do not have any birthday puja as a tradition.

4) On Shivratri we offer extensive prayers to Lord Shiv -Shakti along with Vatuknath Bhairwa (the highest being next to Shiva- Shakti) for days together . The Vaishnavite do not follow this tradition. Vaishnavite Bhairva is a malicious being who if ignored can create obstacles in their worship.

5) We celebrate Janam Ashtami as Zarm Satam , one day before Vaishnavites celebrate it as Lord Ksishnas birthday. Same is the case with Shivratri .

6) Celebrations like Kawpunim Khicri Amavas ,are our historical links with the past . We enjoy preparations made on these occasions.

7) Yagnopavit Samaskara though universal among Hindus has developed a local tradition which involves not only extensive ritualistic puja carried over several days but also heavy expenditure .It is a small time function among Vaishnavites usually carried out for group of boys at teenage or along with marriage of boy .

8) Our death rituals (Antyeshti) are very elaborate which involves extensive rituals on the day of death and again on 10, 11 and 12 day after death

.Even Social customs associated with death are lengthy.

9) We do not celebrate Divali, or Holi with the same enthusiasm as is being done by Vaishnavites. It is not a Shivite tradition.

10) Even in the recitation of Bhagwadgita which is universal we have our way of recitation on occasions like Yagnopavit and death rituals These are some of the differences which mark uniqueness of our traditions.

Post migration dilemma

The loss of interest in our religious traditions started while we all lived happily in Kashmir , which was partly due to lack of real knowledge behind our traditions and partly due to the fact that we had left performance of our religious rituals to our priest class without ever bothering to understand the rationale behind their performance .Post migration we got scattered into various Diasporas all over India mostly in Vaishnavite lands. Our priests had already started getting their children trained into various lucrative professions. After migration the existing ones settled mostly around Jammu .Thus, most of our diasporas who had settled at places like Delhi, Gurgaon, Noida, Faridabad, Pune, Bombay, Bangalore, Chandigarh, Dehradun and other places are left without the services of priests . Since our traditions are unique to us the local priests are not able to perform our rituals to our satisfaction. Hence, when need arises on occasions such as marriage or yagnopavit

ceremony or the cremation of a dear one, we search all corners to find a Kashmiri priest who, as a matter of supply and demand, raises his fees to unaffordable levels for a common man. The community needs to find out a way to preserve our traditions. **Action Plan**

1) We have to bring awareness among our community members, especially the younger generation, about our religious philosophy and our traditions. Although we have many scholars in our community yet they have not paid enough attention to writing about our religious traditions. A lot has been written about Kashmir Shaivism but it is not part of our religious traditions. Kashmir Shaivism is a philosophic concept of our relationship with god and does not guide us in the performance of these traditions. Our priests have produced a few booklets about performance of rituals but they lack background knowledge.

2) Karmkanda, which is a guide book for performance of our rituals, needs to be updated from time to time, keeping in view the needs of the group of people who follow it. It is regional in nature. Our Karmkanda was written centuries back which is not available now. Our present priests have preserved parts of relevant portions for carrying out our Samaskaras. In the present age one does not have time and patience to carry out long and unintelligible rituals, especially when even the priests are not available. We have to rewrite our

karmkanda, as is being done by other Hindu communities, and make it brief.

3) Our seniors have to take out some time off to learn how to carry out our less important rituals. We may avail of the services of trained priests for carrying out major religious functions such as vivah, yagnopavit, yagnya antyeshti but pujas like birthday, Shivratri Purnima, bhumi puja, greh pravesh are simple and can be performed by seniors, or at one house if available, and learn to carry out recitations like Bhawaninamashastra, Indrakshi, Panchastavi, Shivanamapar and other stuties. It could be like a kitty party with the service of prashad as eatables.

4) We need to train priests preferably from our own community. To attract people we must provide for their training, residence in the locality where they serve and adequate assured income to meet their financial needs. This can be done by regular contributions from the community who avail of their services. We had this tradition in our villages when they were paid a part of the harvested crop along with other service providers like barbers carpenters etc. Our priests were part of family who were consulted not only for carrying out rituals but acted as family astrologers as well.

5) We should try to create Mrityuo Samagri Bhandars (materials needed for cremation of dead person) in the localities where we live. It was our

tradition back home in Kashmir and has been preserved in some localities in Jammu and even outside J&K state . A death in a home brings lot of grief and tension. A little help from community members is a great encouragement. The cost of these materials is meager but inconvenience in finding them, especially in our new surroundings, is great.

6) Setting up of community centers. There are reserved places in many new developments for construction of temples which act as community centers. The land offered is at cheap rates. Funding for payment of land and building can be met with donations from residents of locality, especially from those who are well off.

** The author is a great devotee of Karuna Mai Maa - a Kashmiri saint who has established an Ashram at Sohna Gurgaon where all Kashmiri religious practices are followed. He has written a voluminous book on Kashmiri traditions entitled "Socio- Cultural and Religious Traditions of Kashmiri Pandits published in USA. He is President of Samarpan Public Charitable Trust (Regd) which is dedicated to bringing awareness of KP traditions among youth, rewriting of Karmkanda and setting up of centers for learning of KP religious traditions. He lives in Gurgaon and USA and can be approached through mail (pl_raina @ yahoo.com or phone 9868402999 in India).*

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IN THE GAME OF NAME

Rajender Bhat

‘What is in a name’? So said the bard of Avon. ‘A rose by any other name would smell as sweet’. In one stroke of his pen the great writer rubbished all the pains that we take in finding a suitable name. And when you thought that you had finally cracked the code of your name, along comes a numerologist and his calculations reveal the mystery of why you have not been doing well at your job or why that promotion still eludes you. Your name needs the addition of a couple of K’s strategically placed and voila! all your problems are history. Unfortunately it isn’t all that simple. All the guys and gals, that you are competing with, have also added those so sought after K’s and the result is status quo.

Now look at another facet which is 100% Indian. We are the only nation on this planet where people would give an arm to have a name which would identify them as being more backward than the man next door. What wouldn’t a ‘gujjar’ do just to be called a ‘meena’? Youngsters are busy filing affidavits which can give them a name by which they would proudly claim to be more backward than others.

India has been independent for 60 years now and we should be proud of

our leaders who have ensured that while the whole world rushes forward to grab the stars, we are hellbent in progressing backwards. Today more than 100% of our population is backward, in one form or the other, if you add up the various quotas that have been allocated under various classes of backwardness etc. If Mr. Shakespeare were here today he would have plucked the tresses off his head in frustration at the mockery that we have made of such a beautiful observation of his.

Being a Kashmiri, and a Pandit at that, I too have my take on this, albeit, a more light hearted one. For starters I question the very English name of Mr. Shakespeare. My sources reveal that he has kashmiri roots. His fore fathers migrated from Kashmir to England when he was hardly four. His parents had named him Wali Mohammad Sheikh Samad Peer which got mutated to William Shakespeare once he got assimilated in the English society. Now how do you like that for starters?

Kashmiri Pandits are famous for their ready wit and this trait of theirs is abundantly evident in the numerous surnames that our community has acquired over the centuries. Historically, I believe the KP surnames were limited

to a few, like Dhars, Kauls, Bhats, Razdans (Rainas) and a couple of more. Look at the scene today. We have Khosas, Thalsoors, Miskeens, Ambardars, Khers(khars), Bamzais, Munshis, Ganjoos, Mukoos, Hakhus, Sadhus, Kitchlus, Thusoos, Mirakhurs and a host of others. Have we ever thought about the origins of these ? Of course not. We are so engrossed in our daily chores that we have simply lost touch with our very roots.

My guess is that all these surnames were born out of harmless witty pranks and then just stuck on. I have a friend named Joginder whose grandfather Madhusudan Bhat shifted from village Seer (near Baramulla) to Srinagar. To differentiate him from his namesake in the locality his neighbours started calling him Madhusudan Seer and this stuck to him so well that my friend is now known as Joginder Seru.

I read about a nobleman who lived in Chinkral Mohalla of Srinagar a few centuries ago. His name was Madhav jee Kaul. As luck would have it, there were a couple of more Madhav jee Kauls in the area and this created a lot of confusion amongst area residents. Now our Madhav jee had a mulberry tree in his courtyard and this was opportunity enough for the witty KP's who started calling him Madhav jee Tul (mulberry in Kashmiri). This was an affront to the dignity of Madhav jee who immediately

got the tree cut in order to get rid of his newfound name. This action of his provoked the neighbours who now started calling him Madhav jee Mond (kashmiri for the tree stump which was left after the tree was cut). Madhav jee was furious and he called in labourers who dug up the stump. Now, this resulted in a depression in the ground which is called a 'khud' in kashmiri. You guessed it. Madhav jee got a new surname –Madhav jee Khud. Madhav jee ordered the depression to be filled up and as we all know, such jobs are never done perfectly. The depression filling resulted in a slight mound to be formed. A mound is called teng in Kashmiri and so the original Madhav jee Kaul was now called Madhav jee Teng. So fed up did Madhav jee get with all this that he gave up and to this day his descendents are known by the surname 'Teng'.

So, What is in a name? A lot I would say, provided you know how to look at it. Do you look at it in a humorous kind of way to bring some cheer on a dull day or does it become a tool of violence which can hold the whole country to ransom.

(with sincere apologies to anyone who may have felt offended by views expressed in the above article. It never is the intention).

बट संसकार त बट परम्परा

– बालकृष्ण सन्यासी

हारु जूनपछि सतम द्वह हारु मन्डल त्रॉविथ तु बॉदुर प्यतकिस जूनपछय मंज पनुक त्यौहार मनोंविथ त तमि पतय कांबुर्य पछस मंज म्वरदन श्राद हॉविथ छि अंस्य गटि मंज नेरनुच त प्र काशस कुन यिनन्य माता लक्ष्मी हुन्द आशीर्वाद हॉसिल करनुच कामना करान त मूदिमन्यन श्रदाय सान पोशि पूजा करान त चिमय सॉन्य रसम छि सानि परम्पराय हुन्द हिर्सु बनान ।

व्यथ वोठि तलय छि इन्दय सन्दय गवण त अवगवण लबनु यिवान तु यिथकनय छु यि ति पताह लगान जि तैमिस कमहिय गवण त अवगवण छि वरासतस मंज मीलिमुत्य यिम तनुन्दय संस्कार बैनिथ तस सॉत्य सॉत्य पकान रूँदिमुत्य छि । बुजर्गव दस्य हॉवमुच वथय छि सॉन्य संसकार बनावान । तथ वति प्यठ पीरदर पीर पकनुय गव मर्यादायि हुन्ज पालना करुन्य । ईश्वर सन्जि व्वपास्नाये मंज ति छे ग्वनण हुन्ज अहमियथ लबनु यिवान । न्यरग्वण व्वपासनायि मंज छु ईश्वर ग्वनण हन्जि सीमायि न्यबर गाशिआगुर बैनिथ असि असलचि वति प्यठ अननु खॉतर पनुन्य दरवाजु यलु त्रावान अमापोज सग्वण व्वपासना करन विजि छु व्वपासक ईश्वर सन्जिन ग्वनण हन्जि तौता करान त पानस प्यठ तसुन्द अनुग्रह प्राप्त करनुच कूशिश करान । सग्वण व्वपासना करनी गॉयि ईश्वर सन्जि शक्ति मंज लीन गॉछिथ तयान्जि

डेडि तल वातनुच सँच करुन्य । ईश्वर सन्जि मंज छु इन्सान तेलि लीन सपदान येलि सु तसुन्द गुणगान करान त तसन्दुयन ग्वनण प्यठ फिदा गछान छु ।

शिवमतुक लुविलुबावय छु ईश्वर शिव त शक्ति हनिदस रूपस मंज ज्ञानुन त मानुन । अमि कथि हुन्द छु यि मतलब ति जि ग्वण यिकवट मेलान छि तेलिय छि ग्वनण त अवगुणन फेश लगान त गाश आगुर छु निराकार ऑसिथय आकार लवान त केंहन मंजय छु केंह नमूदार सपदान ।

कश्मीर शिवमतुच पहचान छे अँम्युक त्रिक फलसफ त त्रिक फलसफ छु परमशिव सनदुयन त्रेन ग्वनण हन्जि बावथ करुन्य त तिमव ग्वणव मंजय प्रकट सपदिमतिस प्रकाश सोदरस मंज गोतु दिनचि क्रि यायि हुन्द ज्ञान भंडार । म्योन मनशा छुनु बुंक्यनस तमि ज्ञानच व्याख्या करन्य । म्योन मुदा छु फकथ तिमन त्रेन ग्वनण तौत्यज्ञान करन्य यिम त्रिक फलसफक्य आधार सतून छि त युस येमि कथि हुन्द टाकारु सबूथ छु जि आत्मा युस परमात्मा सुन्द अंश छु सु येलि मँरिस मंज अचान छु तैमिसुन्द वजूद ति छु ग्वनण त अवग्वनण प्यठय दँरिथ आसान । यिम त्रे ग्वण छि परा, परापरा त अपरा यिमन त्रेन ग्वनण ह्ययकव अँस्य त्रे कव्वच ति वँनिथ । परा छे परम शिवसन्जि स्व कव्वथ

येमि किन्थ सु परिपूर्ण छु त सु प्रकाश स्वरूप छु त यथ स्वरूपस मंज ब्रह्मांडन हुन्द ब्रह्मांड छि त त्युहुन्द गटगाश त तमिगग तुलत्राव त हलचल मूजूद छे ।

परापरा छे तसन्ज स्व कव्वथ या अमल येमि वे तसन्ज प्रजनथ सपदान छे त दिव्य ज्योति आकारुक आभास गछान छु । अपरा छे परमशिव सन्ज स्व कव्वथ येमि किन्थ सु जानदारन क्योहो बेजानन मंज वास करान छु त असि मंज ग्वण त अवग्वण बैनिथ पाफ या पुण्य रुत या अरुत वरतावान छु, अपरा छे राम शिव सन्ज स्व शक्ती येमि किन्थ इनसान सुन्द वजूद मुमकिन छु । आत्मा छु पनन्यव पतिम्यव करमव हिसाबय नैविस ज्ञानमस मंज कुनि ति यूनी मंज त कुनि ति जौच मंज यिवान येति सु ततिक्थन संस्कारन मंज पलान छु त प्रथान छु त यिमनुय संस्कारन मंज रूजिथ छु सु या तु ग्वणवान बनन न नत पोपी ।

यि छु पजर जि ईश्वर छु असि मंज वास करान त वि ति छु बननु यिवान जि सु छु न पारव प्यठ काँह कथ ति ह्वान ति क्याजि सु छु असि मंज अकालि हन्दिस रूपस मंज ति मूजूद त अकलय छे सॉनि व्वथबेठ तय करान त सानि जिंदगी हुन्द

मंजिल वदि कडान । अमिय कथि सॉत्य छु यि पजर ति पजान केँह ति सपदितन चकि छु करन बोल फकथ ईश्वरय आसान । दीय सुन्जि यछायि मुतौविखय छि ऑसि करम करान त ग्वणवान या पोपी बनन त ग्वण त अवग्वण ति छि अमी पजर मंज द्रामत्य युस स्वंदर छु त प्रकाशवान छु । न्यरग्वण व्पासनायि मंज छे कव्वथ वनि Energy पानस मंज मुकमल त अथ मंज मूजूद गट त गाशी छि नकारात्मक त सकारात्मक क्ववच यिम ग्वण त अवग्वणचि शकलि मंज ऑमिच तुलत्राव बनान छे ।

ग्वण छि त्रेय कसमुक्य आसान त यिम छि सतोगुण, रजोगुण त तमोगुण । सतोगुणी छु पानस परिपूर्णक अंश मानान त यिथकैन्थ सु जान करनस त ज्ञान बाँगरावनस मंजन्य जिदंगी गुजारान रजोगुणी छु बहोदरी करनस मंज त यश कर्मोविथ पनुन पान थजरस वातनावनस मंज दिलचस्पी थवान ।

तमोगुणी छु कुनि हदस ताम बुदिहीन आसान त तमि किन्थ छु सु खहश्यातन हुनद गुलाम ति बनान । सु छु वोछि त त्रेश होमरावन खौतर काँह ति वथ यखतियार करनु तयार आसान ।

*A wise man learns by the mistakes of others,
a fool by his own.*

Latin Proverb

TEN COMMANDMENTS FOR PEACE OF MIND

[Very good one] - Sri Sri Ravi Shankar To: Brian Fernandez

1. Do Not Interfere In Others' Business Unless Asked Most of us create our own problems by interfering too often in others' affairs. We do so because somehow we have convinced ourselves that our way is the best way, our logic is the perfect logic and those who do not conform to our thinking must be criticized and steered to the right direction, our direction. This thinking denies the existence of individuality and consequently the existence of God. God has created each one of us in a unique way. No two human beings can think or act in exactly the same way. All men or women act the way they do because God within them prompts them that way. There is God to look after everything. Why are you bothered? Mind your own business and you will keep your peace.

2. Forgive And Forget - This is the most powerful aid to peace of mind. We often develop ill feelings inside our heart for the person who insults us or harms us. We nurture grievances. This in turn results in loss of sleep, development of stomach ulcers, and high blood pressure. This insult or injury was done once, but nourishing of grievance goes on forever by constantly remembering it. Get over this bad habit. Believe in the justice of God and the doctrine of Karma. Let Him judge the act of the one who insulted you. Life is too short to waste in such trifles. Forgive, Forget, and march on. Love flourishes in giving and forgiving.

3. Do Not Crave For Recognition This world is full of selfish people. They seldom praise anybody without selfish motives. They may praise you today because you are in power, but no sooner than you are powerless; they will forget your achievement and will start finding faults in you. Why do you wish to kill yourself in striving for their recognition? Their recognition is not worth the aggravation. Do your duties ethically and sincerely and leave the rest to God.

4. Do Not Be Jealous - We all have experienced how jealousy can disturb our peace of mind. You know that you work harder than your colleagues in the office, but sometimes they get promotions; you do not. You started a business several years ago, but you are not as successful as your neighbor whose business is only one year old. There are several examples like these in everyday life. Should you be jealous? No. Remember everybody's life is shaped by his or her previous Karma, which has now become his destiny. If you are destined to be rich, nothing in the world can stop you. If you are not so destined, no one can help you either. Nothing will be gained by blaming others for your misfortune. Jealousy will not get you anywhere; it will only take away your peace of mind.

5. Change Yourself According To The Environment If you try to change the environment single-handedly, the chances are you will fail. Instead, change yourself to suit your environment. As you do this, even

the environment, which has been unfriendly to you, will mysteriously change and seem congenial and harmonious.

6. Endure What Cannot Be Cured

This is the best way to turn a disadvantage into an advantage. Every day we face numerous inconveniences, ailments, irritations, and accidents that are beyond our control. If we cannot control them or change them, we must learn to put up with these things. We must learn to endure them cheerfully thinking, "God wills it so, so be it." God's plan is beyond our comprehension. Believe in it and you will gain in terms of patience, inner strength and will power.

7. Do Not Bite Off More Than You Can Chew - This maxim needs to be remembered constantly. We often tend to take more responsibilities than we are capable of carrying out. This is done to satisfy our ego. Know your limitations. Why take on additional loads that may create more worries? You cannot gain peace of mind by expanding your external activities. Reduce your material engagements and spend time in prayer, introspection and meditation. This will reduce those thoughts in your mind that make you restless. Uncluttered mind will produce greater peace of mind.

8. Meditate Regularly - Meditation calms the mind and gets rid of disturbing thoughts. This is the highest state of peace of mind. Try and experience it yourself. If you meditate earnestly for half an hour everyday, your mind will tend to become peaceful during the remaining twenty-three and half-hours. Your mind will not be easily disturbed as it was before. You would benefit

by gradually increasing the period of daily meditation. You may think that this will interfere with your daily work. On the contrary, this will increase your efficiency and you will be able to produce better results in less time.

9. Never Leave The Mind Vacant

An empty mind is the devil's workshop. All evil actions start in the vacant mind. Keep your mind occupied in something positive, something worthwhile. Actively follow a hobby. Do something that holds your interest. You must decide what you value more: money or peace of mind. Your hobby, like social work or temple work, may not always earn you more money, but you will have a sense of fulfillment and achievement. Even when you are resting physically, occupy yourself in healthy reading or mental chanting of God's name.

10. Do Not Procrastinate And Never Regret - Do not waste time in protracted wondering "Should I or shouldn't I?" Days, weeks, months, and years may be wasted in that futile mental debating. You can never plan enough because you can never anticipate all future happenings. Always remember, God has His own plan, too for you. Value your time and do the things that need to be done. It does not matter if you fail the first time. You can learn from your mistakes and succeed the next time. Sitting back and worrying will lead to nothing. Learn from your mistakes, but do not brood over the past. **DO NOT REGRET.** Whatever happened was destined to happen only that way. Take it as the Will of God. You do not have the power to alter the course of God's Will. Why cry over spilt milk

A PAGE FROM JAYA SIBU'S WRITINGS

C L Raina

Kashmir ke Swarnim Samsmiran

— Jaya Sibū

Sadaa yaad Aate hai
Nitya nootan chintan mei
Abhinavgupta aur Vasugupta,
Kshemraj aur Kshemendra,
Kalhan aur Bilhan
Mammat aur Jayatt—
Aur Kin Kin Ko Ginaay
Ek Shrinkhlaa hai Bani Huyii
— jismai Kashmir kii Laughaksha Kriti,
Trika Darshan Chintan Aur Manan
Dharma Aur Drishtikona
Sanskriti Aur Kala Kaushal
Unkii lekhnī se Hii Sushobit Huyee Hai,
Ham Jise Adbut Kashmiri Kriti Kahte
Aaye Hai~n
Jinkaa Ham Adheyan Karte bhii Hai'n
Nitya Apni PEHCHAAN Bataane Ke Liye
Ki Ham Kaun Hai—
Kyaa Thay— Kya Ho Sakte Hai~n
VishvaaNar Aur Vishva Sanskriti Mei

De Sakste Hai~n Bahut Kuchh—
Yogdan Atma Utsarga Ke Liye
Vishva Abhyodaya Ke Liye—
Yedi Lall Vakh Ko Hii Ley
To Vishva Darshan Kaa Adbhut Chintan
Baant Sakte Hai Vishva Sanskriti mei.
Apnii Nava Paud Ko Avashya Hii
Bataa sakte Hai'n
KASHMIR SANSKRITI ke Sambandh mei
Kahnaa Hoga, Uddharanoo Ke dwaraa
Yehi NaYi Paud Ab Samrakshak bhiihai~n
Aur Uttar-Adhikaari Bhi
In Mei hii Arya Sanskriti Kaa
Shaiva Sanskriti Kaa
Shakta Sanskriti Kaa Samaavesh Hai
Yehi Meraa Namra Nivedan Hai
Yehi kavita Kaa Saransha Hai
Chamanlal Raina

POWERFUL YET GENTLE

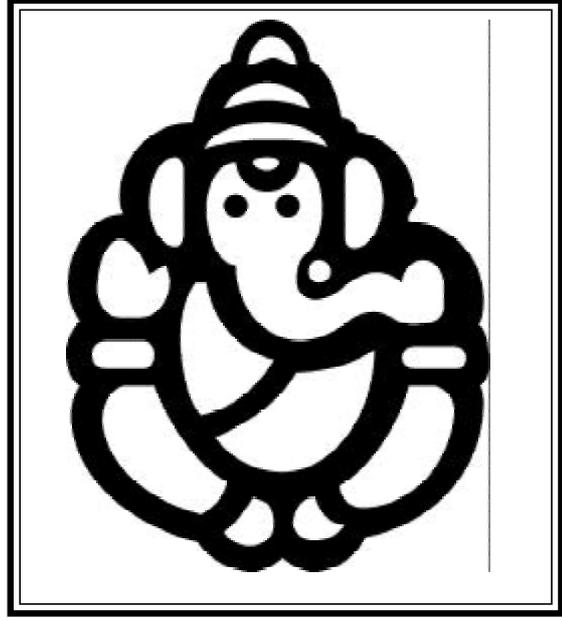
Dr Alka Pande

Ganesha, the lord of wisdom, intellect, prudence, fortune and the remover of obstacles, is the first idol to be placed in a new home.

Often seen as the embodiment of the cosmos, Ganesha is also known as Aumkara as his body is shaped in the form of the auspicious Aum. His elephantine head symbolises the intelligence and beatitude of the elephant, powerful yet gentle. His *mooshika* symbolises the humility that he espouses in the company of smaller creatures. In a world full of struggle, obstacles and oppositions, Ganesha comes forth as the Vighna Vinayaka.

Ganesha reigns supreme. He is the first among all gods because, for him, his parents were the centre of his world. No auspicious occasion or ceremony begins without invocation to Lord Ganapati.

Rarely is a Ganesha image found in isolation. It is said that Ganesha always travels with his own army; in a household if there is one image of the deity, many will follow. Ganesha Vandana, an innovation to the deity, heralds the beginning of any performance by an Indian artist.



His significance in popular culture arose in the mid 15th century. He is the Siddhidata, or the bestower of accomplishments, and is propitiated first before other gods. Ganesha's popularity extends from India to other parts of the world, especially Nepal, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Indonesia, Thailand, Tibet, Myanmar, China, Japan, Afghanistan, and parts of central Asia.

Be it spirituality, the literary genre or popular culture, Ganesha supremacy is widely visible. The *Ganesha Pancharatnam* of Adi Sankaracharya of the first millennium, in Sanskrit, salutes

Ganesha. The Tamil works of Tirumoolar and Avvaiyaar also have hymns saluting Ganesha. Sanskrit texts like the *Ganesha Astava*, *Ganesh Sahasranama* and *Vatapi Ganapatim Bhaje* salute Ganesha in all forms in temples and shrines.

India's tribal arts and crafts also bear his mark. From sculptures to stained glass, from Dhokra craft to south Indian wood craft, his popularity is manifold.

There is the Ganesha sculpture at Kurudumale temple, a riding Ganapati in Kavi Wall Mural, wooden idols of Ganesha worshiped by tribals of Madhya Pradesh, sandalwood

Ganesha figures crafted by traditional artisans from Karnataka and Tamil Nadu or Orissa's soft stone and hard stone Ganeshas crafted by local artisans around puri temple.

Artists and sculptors have interpreted the image from puranic tales to the 1,001 names of the god.

He is the one god who is enjoying an unprecedented international flavour, having caught the fascination of the western world.

The writer is curator, art consultant and adviser and a Ganesha expert.

The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy."

Martin Luther King, Jr.

Never tell people how to do things. Tell them what to do and they will surprise you with their ingenuity.

George Patton

KASHMIRI BHAJANS/ LEELA

यी आव में समजस

– जया सिबू रैना
(ओरिका से)

भगवान छु कुनुय, रूँफ छिस स्यठाह पॉठय ।
ग्यानुँ—गंगायि मंज दिवनावतम बोताह मीठ्य—पॉठ्य ॥
अवतार बऽनिथ आख सनातन शब्द हयथ ।
सूहम व्यछनिथ प्रणविथ चे व्यतस्ता व्यथ ॥

शब्दुक— आकार गऽनिरोवुथ द्यन तय राथ ।
पोनर्वस तुँ मृगशर नख्यतरम वुछुथ साथ ॥
चेतना मंज चीतन व्यविथ जोतेयि शरिका ।
राऽग्न्यायि हुन्द रंगिथ रंग ग्रजेयि प्रगन्या ॥

आगम शास्त्रन गाह त्रॉव प्रखटोवतन प्रकाश ।
ग्यान—व्येगान परापर शब्दव मिलनोव आकाश ॥
वैखरीयार यारबलुँ मंजुँ द्रयि वुजमल तुँ रेह ।
दोपुख भगवार छु बब बऽनिथ बाऽगरावार श्रेह ॥

मायातीत मायायि मंज मन्दुथ शॅरिद ओमकार ।
छु आगुर ब्रहमतीजुक, न्यराकारस द्राव साकार ॥
गतुँ ग्यूर प्राण—अपानस गछान, सूहम नेरान ज्यवे ।
बऽखती हुँदिस आलमस मंज, शबनम प्यवान लवे ॥

ग्युंदमुत ओस सोदुँ ब्रॉर्य, बोदुँ ब्रोर रूदुस जागे ।
शालमाऽरन फुलय लऽज वननि, भगवान आव बगे ॥
सेतार वोयुन, सतन तारन साज द्राव, परनि लोग गीता ।
कर्म यूगस बल म्यूल, तोलसनस आयि पृथ्वी माता ॥

ललद्यदि नीलवठ त्रोव, ग्रजनोवुँन वाख तुँ वचुन ।
बब भगवान शब्द माऽनिथ न्यबरँ हयतुन अंदर अचुन ॥
चुँ दिवता छुख, किनु मुनिश्वर, र्योश किनुँ तपीश्वर
जया छय नाद लायान 'ही सत्य आकार नन्दकीश्वर ॥

भगवान गोपीनाथ जी गायत्री

— प्रो. मखन लाल कुकिलु

भगवते गोपीनाथाय विद्महे
वैखरीविहारदेवाय धीमाहि
तन्नो भैरवः/हंसः प्रचोदयात्

कहा है कि 'इत्याहूय गायत्री त्रि सतुचचार्य तत्त्ववित्' अर्थात्, इष्टदेव को पूजापीठ पर बुलाकर तीन बार तत्त्वज्ञानी गायत्री का उच्चारण करे। गायत्री प्रत्येक देव/देवी की भिन्न होती है, इसमें इष्टदेव/देवी के विशेष शक्ति चिन्हों का अंकन होता है, जिन्हें स्मरण करके हम उनका चिन्तन मनन व निदिध्यासन करते हैं। इसमें तीन क्रिया रूपों को निर्देश होता है। जैसे—विद्महे, धीमाहि, प्रचोदयात्। 'विद्महे' क्रिया शब्द का तात्पर्य है कि हम इस देव को बाराधना आदि से पहले "जानते हैं"। फिर "धीमाहि" क्रिया शब्द का तात्पर्य है कि हम इसके स्वरूप को जानने के पश्चात् उनका ध्यान करते हैं। फिर ज्ञान व ध्यान के पश्चात् हम इस इष्टदेव/देवी से प्रार्थना करते हैं कि वह "प्रचोदयात्" हमारी बुद्धि को अच्छे कर्मों में प्रेरित करे ताकि हमारा ज्ञान व ध्यान सफल हो। इस प्रकार प्रत्येक देव/देवी का ध्यान धारणा आदि से पहिले निर्दिष्ट गायत्री का उच्चारण आवश्यक है। स्मरण रहे केवल "महागायत्री" ही एक ऐसी दिव्य शक्ति है जिस की गायत्री में उपरोक्त तीन क्रियारूपों का अंकन न होके केवल दो क्रिया रूपों — धीमाहि तथा प्रचोदयात् का निर्देश होता है। उसमें

'विद्महे' क्रियारूप नहीं मिलता है। कारण यह है कि माता गायत्री एक ऐसी दिव्य शक्ति है जिसका ज्ञान जन्म से ही हमें स्वतः सिद्ध है। उसे हमें जानने की आवश्यकता नहीं। क्योंकि शास्त्रों में लिखा है कि "प्राक् सवित् प्राणे परिणता" अर्थात् संवितशक्ति! शरीर संरचना में सबसे पहिले उदित होती है जो प्राणन रूप में दृष्टिगोचर होती है। इसी को शैव-शास्त्रों में 'स्पन्द' के नाम से भी पुकारा गया है। अतः माता गायत्री 'यंवित्' के रूप में जन्म के साथ-साथ प्रादूर्भूत होती है। इसीलिए केवल 'महागायत्री' की गायत्री में विद्महे क्रियारूप का अभाव है। देखिये — "तत् सवितुर्वरेण्यं भर्गो देवस्य धीमाहि, धियो यो नः प्रचोदयात्"।

संत शिरोमणि भगवान गोपीनाथ जी की यह गायत्री इस महान् संत के देवत्व पद का अधिकारी होने का संकेत देती है क्योंकि केवल 'देव' ही गायत्री पद—माक् होते हैं अन्य व्यक्ति नहीं।

भगवते गोपीनाथाय विद्महे— सर्वेश्वर्यमान् श्री गोपीनाथ—'बब' का हम पहले ज्ञान प्राप्त करते हैं। फिर उनका 'धीमाहि' — ध्यान करते हैं 'वैखुरी विहार देवाय' कश्मीर मण्डल में श्रीनगर स्थित 'वैखुरी विहार' — अर्थात् 'खरयार' के अधिष्ठातृ देवता के रूप में। फिर इस महान् देव से हम प्रार्थना करते हैं कि वह हमारी बुद्धि को सन्मार्ग में प्रेरित करें — तन्नो भैरवः प्रचोदयात्।।

लीला

कुमार अशोक सराफ 'घायल'

येली मन प्राण शोचें रावख
रेंचर जीवों त्येली प्रावख
येली दयि नाव घॅनिरावख
रेंचर जीवों त्येली प्रावख

दोहय मन्थर चें पुजान रोज़
करारुक दिल बॅरिथ दी सोज
बुछख पानय चें क्याह प्रावख
रेंचर जीवों त्येली प्रावख

चे मा छुय जॉह ति थोवमुत ज्वन
जि ऑखॅर भावना गॉयि क्याह
सोरिथ येमि योर चें वुछ छावख
रेंचर जीवों त्येली प्रावख

पुशर तस पान चें मॅशिराव नाम
फिकिर कथ किछ् चें बॅल्य छुय भ्रम

स्वरान रोजुन कथ किछ् चें बॅल्य छुय भ्रम
रेंचर जीवों त्येली प्रावख

करुन्य तीरथ दरुन्य ऑठम
जरूरी छिय नसॅ यिम खम
अगर श्रोचर मनुक थावख
रेंचर जीवों तयेती प्रावख

बजर तॅम्य सुन्द जगथ सोरुय
चे छय गफॅलत यिथय बॅल्य छॅर
मुँचर अँछ नोव नव्येर बावख
रेंचर जीवों त्येली प्रावख

वनान 'घॉयिल' यि कॅछा सन
पिछुय वनॅनस प्योवुस किथें ज्वन
हना अज सन पगाह बावख
रेंचर जीवो स्येली प्रावख
येली मर प्राण शोचें रावख

*The man of wisdom is never of two minds;
the man of benevolence never worries;
the man of courage is never afraid.*

Confucius

THE SHRINE OF SARADA

This Majestic Monument Is Deeply Rooted In The Ancient History

Of Kashmir Writes M. Ashraf

Kalahana in Rajataragini mentions about the five most famous things of ancient Kashmir. The first among these is the learning. Kashmir was known through out the world as an important centre of learning. Almost all foreign explorers who visited Kashmir in ancient times have mentioned about the intelligence of the local people. Kashmiris were reputed to be intelligent, good looking, hard working, and good foot walkers. An important centre of this learning in ancient Kashmir was the Shrine of Sarada, now referred to as "Sharda Peeth". This was considered to be the temple of Sarasvati, the Goddess of learning. Sir Aurel Stein, the translator of Kalhana's Rajatarangini has devoted an entire chapter on the discovery of this shrine by him. He mentions that the great Jain scholar Hemacandra was commissioned by King Jayasimha of Gujrat to compose a new grammar. He requested the King for being supplied with eight old grammars, which could be found complete only in the library of Goddess Sarasvati in Kashmir. Jayasimha immediately dispatched some high officials to Pravarapura to obtain the manuscripts. These were brought by envoys and delivered to Hemacandra, who after perusing these composed his own great grammatical work, the Siddhahemacandra. It has

not been confirmed whether these manuscripts actually came from the Shrine of Sarada but this much is established that the fame of the Shrine as a seat of learning had spread far and wide. There are many other references about the Shrine in ancient chronicles.

Kalhana mentions about the visit of King Gauda of Bengal to Kashmir during the reign of Lalitaditya for specifically visiting the Shrine of Sarada. Even Alberuni has mentioned about the well known Shrine of Sarada very much venerated and frequented by pilgrims, which according to him, housed a very famous wooden idol of Sarasvati. The famous Kashmiri poet Bilhana ascribes the patronage of learning claimed by the city of Srinagar to favour of Goddess Sarasvati of Sarada. The Goddess is said to, "Resemble a swan, carrying as her diadem the glittering gold washed from the sand of the Madhumati stream which is bent upon rivalling Ganga. Spreading lustre by her fame, brilliant like crystal, she makes even Mount Himalaya, the preceptor of Gauri; raise higher his head (his peaks) in pride of her residence there". Kashmir has claimed from early times to be the land beloved by Sarasvati-Sarada, and consequently

the designations of Saradapitha, Saradamandala have been commonly used to describe it. These designations have helped in attracting universal attention to this Tirtha. Reference to Sarada Temple is also found in Jonaraja's Chronicle wherein the visit of King Zain-ul-Abidin to the Shrine in 1422 A.D. is mentioned. The King is supposed to have accompanied a regular pilgrimage to the Shrine. According to Abu-L-Fazal's notice in Ain-i-Akbari, the temple of "Sharada" enjoyed considerable reputation even in sixteenth century.

Thus, this ancient Tirtha which Kalahana refers as "Saradasthana" was one of the most important in Kashmir, and it was definitely famous far beyond its limits. The highly disturbed political conditions of the Upper Kishenganga Valley in the later Mughal and Afghan rule resulted in the neglect of this Shrine. Because of these disturbed conditions which continued even in Sikh rule, the pilgrimage to the Shrine did not have any attraction for the peace loving Brahmans of Kashmir. In the time of Stein (1892) it had almost become unknown to the Pandits of Srinagar. Stein consulted a number of ancient chronicles and references to trace the route to this famous but unknown shrine. Saradamahtmya, Abu-I-Fazal's Ain Akbari, and Alberuni's mention of this ancient shrine helped Stein to arrive at the approximate direction to the spot where the shrine was

supposed to exist. His journey to the shrine is most exciting and adventurous. In September, 1892, he went on a tour of north Kamraz to ascertain the exact position of the Tirtha. Narrating his travel he mentions, "The first reliable information regarding it I obtained from Pandit Sant Ram, a Purohita resident at Sogam, Lolav. He described to me accurately enough the route followed by the pilgrims. Confirming a surmise I had already previously formed, he indicated to me the village and "Ruins" of Sardi, shown on the map at the confluence of Kisanganga and Kankatori Rivers, as the place of Sarada Shrine". Stein then describes in detail his journey to Sardi where the Shrine is located. He relates his first view of the Shrine, "At the turn of the path the fort of Sardi and the ancient temple of Sarada come conspicuously in view, with a magnificent amphitheatre of high peaks behind them.

The Kisanganga which issues only a short distance above Sardi from a long and a narrow chasm in the mountains, flows here with comparative smoothness". Description of the temple is quite exhaustive. "The temple of Sarada rises in a prominent and commanding position above the right bank of Madhumati on the terrace like foot of a spur which descends from high pine-clad peak to the E. Immediately below this terrace to the N.W. is the spot where the waters of Madhumati

and Kisanganga mingle. There on a small sandy beach pilgrims perform their Sraddhas. From the height of the staircase, which forms approach to the temple from the W., an extensive view opens. To the S.E. the valley of the Madhumati is seen narrowing gradually into a gorge between precipitous spurs through which passes the direct route to Kashmir via Kroras. In the N.E. from where the Kisanganga issues, successive ranges of steep barren steep mountains with snowy peaks behind them, seem to close all passage. To the N. a narrow chasm in the rocks marks the debouchure of the Sargan River, the Kankatori of the map, which flows from the mountains towards Cilas and falls into the Kisanganga a short distance above Madhumati. It is the Sarasvati of Kalhana's description, still known by that name to local tradition. To the W. the view extends to the high ranges which rise in the direction of Khagan". After 1947, the Shrine which falls in the Pakistan Administered Side of Kashmir got

completely cut off from the valley.

A couple of years back it was visited by some journalists from Jammu. It is stated to be in ruins and totally unattended. Recently there has been some talk about establishing a Sarada Peeth in Kashmir. Setting up another University or a seat of learning under an ancient name will not give it the same value and stature as the original institution enjoyed. However, it would be more useful to get the ancient Shrine restored as it has immense historical value for Kashmir. It could be one of the confidence building measures between the two parts of Kashmir. If it is possible to renovate some Hindu temples and Sikh Gurudwaras in different parts of Pakistan, why not this ancient Shrine which has a tremendous association with ancient Kashmir.

(The author is the former Director General, J & K, and can be mailed at ashrafmjk@gmail.com)

*The first step in the acquisition of wisdom is
silence, the second listening, the third memory, the
fourth practice, the fifth teaching others.*

Solomon Ibn Gabriol

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