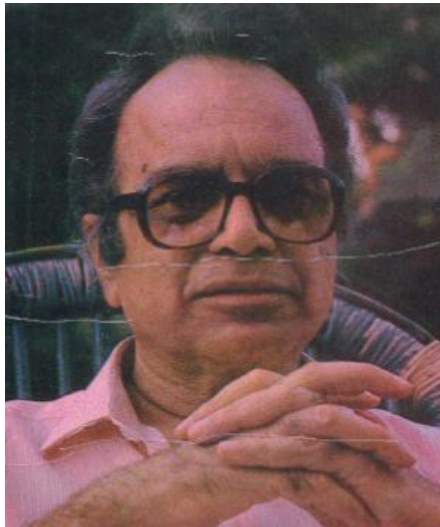




Jagmohan

Ex-Governor of Jammu & Kashmir State

Articles on Kashmir



JAGMOHAN

SELECTED ARTICLES ON KASHMIR

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1.0 JAGMOHAN

Shri Jagmohan is certainly one of the topmost civil servants that the country has produced in the post-Independence period. He was the youngest Lt.-Governor of Delhi and the only one who held this prestigious office for two terms. During his second term, the capital had the unique distinction of successfully organising the Asiad, CHOGM and Non-aligned Conference (1982-83). Earlier, he served with great distinction in a number of key assignments, including that of Chief Executive of Delhi Development Authority for over seven years and as Lt.-Governor of Goa, Daman and Diu.



Shri Jagmohan has also the rare distinction of being nationally honoured twice by the President of India. He was awarded Padma Shri for "making significant contribution to the formulation and implementation of the Delhi Master Plan and for playing a pioneering role in planning and implementation of projects". He was also awarded Padma Bhushan for his "exceptionally meritorious services to the country".

Shri Jagmohan was also given a cultural award by the Australian Government in 1975. In the mid-sixties, he travelled around the world on a fellowship granted by the Indian Institute of Public Administration, New Delhi. He also attended torso United Nations Conferences on 'Human Settlements' in Tehran and on 'Habitat' in Vancouver.

Shri Jagmohan's published works include over 50 articles in leading newspapers and journals and three books: *Rebuilding Shahjahanabad: The Walled City of Delhi*; *Island of Truth*; and *The Challenge of Our Cities*.

Shri Jagmohan, again, is the only one who has held the office of the Governor, Jammu and Kashmir, twice. He also formulated and carried out the historic reform of 'Mate Vaishno Devi Shrine'. Presently, a Member of Parliament, Shri Jagmohan is a household name in the country.

2.0 VISION OF INDIA AND KASHMIR'S PLACE IN THAT VISION

WHAT is our vision of India and what is Kashmir's place in that vision? This is the fundamental question that every Indian, genuinely concerned about the future of the country, should be asking himself or herself, but which practically no one is asking. Therein lies the tragedy of India. The Republic that came into being on January 26, 1950, has shown little aptitude or willingness to define clearly, its true vision and its true destiny and to pledge itself to the realization of that vision and that destiny.



The great question that should have been faced by us was one our civilisational and cultural identity and its rejuvenation and regeneration so as to enable us to provide an inspirational and ideological base for building a strong and well-knit India with fundamental values and a design and life-style of its own. But we ignored this great question and acted like a blind man with a lantern in his hand, assuming that the outer light was a substitute for the inner one. No wonder, we now find ourselves in a snake-pit-a pit of frightening darkness and dimension, a pit that has exposed us to grave dangers not only in Kashmir but also in other parts of the country.

The fundamental challenge that confronts us today is how to extricate ourselves from this snake-pit and come out of the atmosphere of chaos and confusion and move into one of stability, and orderliness with lights of true vision and motivation of true destiny guiding us.

What, we must ask ourselves in all earnestness, is India?? Is it a mere collection of States. and territories or something more than that? Is it a new political reality only or also an expression of a common heritage and history, a common culture, a common set of values that have nursed and nurtured the same way of life for ages in diverse circumstances and in different regions.

The answer to these questions is clear. The new Republic is a new constitutional entity. But it is not merely that. It is also a historical and cultural continuity-a continuity that is unique, a continuity that mocks at the ravages of time and has remained unperturbed by the scars and stains left by the upheaval and uproars of history. And all parts of the country, including Kashmir, are a part of continuity. Few in our country-practically none amongst the ruling elites who have dominated the political scene in the post-independence period, realize that Kashmir's relationship with the rest of India is based not merely on the Instrument of Accession and Articles 1 and 370 of the Constitution of India; it is rooted in far more potent and enduring forces whom neither the turbulence and tornadoes of the past nor the negativism and nihilism of the present-day politics can really destroy. It is a relationship of mind and soul that has existed from the time immemorial and found ample expression in common avenues of intellect and emotions, poetry, and literature, philosophy and outlook. Every green pasture that you walk around in Kashmir, every silvery peak that you watch from pleasurable distance, every stream that sings its song by your side, every enchanting lake that you come across now and then and every little town and city that visit, has some signpost or the other of this deep and abiding relationship. Kalhana was not off the mark when he observed in Rajatarangani that there was hardly any place in Kashmir that was not a tirtha. And Vincent Smith rightly pointed out that ancient India had nothing more worthy of its early civilization than the grand ruins of Kashmir.

To understand in depth Kashmir's relationship with the rest of India, it is necessary to address ourselves to a few basic questions.

What were the forces that brought into existence, about 4,000 years ago, a quiet little temple on what is now known as the Sankaracharya Hill? What made the great Kashmiri King Lalitaditya (721-761) to build the glorious temple in honour of Surya, the Sun God, at Martanda, and Avanti Verman (855-883) to construct equally splendid temples at Avantipura? What inner urges did these constructions symbolize? What philosophy, what temper of mind, did they represent? Were these inner urges, these tempers of mind, not products of the same cultural forces that prevailed in other parts of India?

How is it that for thousands of years, the learned Brahmins of South India have been, on getting up from bed, folded their hands, looked northward and prayed: Namaste; Saradadevi: Kashmiri Mandala Vasini (I salute the Goddess of Sarada who resides in Kashmir). Why is it that even now parents tell their children to seek the blessings of this Goddess of Learning who has her abode in North Kashmir in the valley of Kishanganga?

What made Sankara, when he wanted to rejuvenate the spirit of India, to travel from a small hut of Kaladi in Kerala all the way to the distant hills in Kashmir? And what made him to stay there for quite some time and compose his famous poem, Soundarya Lahari, propounding his philosophy of Shakti and Shiva? Why is it that Abihava Gupta, the great savant of Kashmir Sahivism, is also called 'Sankaracharya of Kashmir', and how is it that he draws his philosophic thought from the same cultural spring as that of Sankara?

What were the forces that attracted Swami Vivekananda from Calcutta to Kanyakumari and then to Kashmir? What made him standing before the holy cave of Amarnath, experience one of the highest stages of spiritual ecstasy? Why was he so captivated by the sight in the cave that for days, to use the words of Sister Nivedita, he could speak of nothing else but the image of Shiva and proclaim that he had never been so greatly inspired as then?

What do the various landmarks on the route from Pahalgam to the cave of Amarnath-Chandanwani, Pishu Ghati, Seshnag, Panchtarni- stand for? Are they not some of the most important symbols of Indian culture and, beliefs?

How is it that Kashmir had always an innate attraction for Indian saints and sages, poets and philosophers, and provided them with perennial, inspiration? What, in moments, of poetic intensity, made Kalidasa see the 'laughter of Shiva' in the Himalayas and Subramania Bharati think of Kashmir as the Crown of Mother India?

The answer to all these questions is one and only one: Kashmir, for thousands of years, has been a part of the Indian vision-a silent and serene, yet solid and strong part; an integral and inseparable part. Even when Islam came to Kashmir, it did not alter the ethos of the common folk. Most of the Islamic teachings were just grafted on Vedantic beliefs and thoughts. The central message of Kashmir's patron saint and founder of the Rishi order, Sheikh Nooruddin Noorani was: There is one God, But with a hundred names. There is not a single blade of grass, which does not worship Him.

Sheikh Nooruddin himself was deeply influenced by Lal Ded who "saw Shiva and Shakti sealed in one" and whose outlook was permeated with some of the finest components of Indian thought and tradition. Both Sheikh Nooruddin and Lal Ded were endowed "with vision which increases the power of speech and with inspired speech that makes vision penetrating". It was their inspired speech and their penetrating vision coupled with earthy sense and rub of life, that kept the Kashmiri ethos within the over-all cultural mainstream of India even after a very large part of the Valley's population had been brought under the fold of Islam. The followers of the Rishi Order abhorred killings. Like the Jains, they were careful not to cause harm even to insects. Sheikh Nooruddin went to the extent of refusing to walk on grass lest it should be damaged. Poet Mohammad Iqbal, who was a Kashmiri by descent, also noted in one of his Persian couplets, the habit of Kashmiri Muslims to carve out moortiseven from the stones of graves.

The list of the living symbols and signposts of Kashmir's relationship with the rest of India is long and virtually unending. But for our policy-makers, whether they sit in North Block or South Block or Shastri Bhavan it does not exist. No mention of its is ever made either inside or outside the country. No child is taught a word about it. No pressman writes a line on the subject. All that is spoken of or written about, almost ad nauseam, is the special relationship, the need to continue and strengthen Article 370, and of giving more and more autonomy-'anything short of azadi'-promoting thereby separatist psyche and according to tacit approval to the 'two-nations' or 'three-nations' theory.

It is strange that Jawaharlal Nehru, who had a strong sense of history, spoke or wrote, after August 1947, very little about Kashmir's underlying bonds with the rest of India and hardly took them into consideration while framing his Kashmir policy instead, he showed a marked disposition to rely on personally-oriented relations and that too, with very few individuals like Sheikh Abdullah and Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed. Though himself a Kashmiri by descent, he took practically no step to fertilize the commonality of the mindscape and to bring home to all concerned Kashmir's inerasable place in the Indian vision. The partition of the country badly stabbed this vision. In extenuation of Nehru's and other Indian leaders' inability to prevent this partition, it could, perhaps, be said they had to reckon with British manipulations. But in free India not to reinvigorate centuries-old vision with its deep roots in culture, tradition and other gambits of life, was nothing short of committing a lapse of a vast historic proportion. The Indian decision-makers went astray at every turning point of Kashmir's contemporary history as they had neither any clear idea about the true vision of India nor of Kashmir's place in that vision. They had no fundamental ideological or inspirational base from which a coherent consistent and constructive pattern of thoughts and deeds could emerge. Their approach was spurious, superficial and personally-oriented, giving no attention to the forces that shaped the mindscape. Consequently, they have brought Kashmir and the rest of India to the brink of spiritual and cultural divorce. They have created an atmosphere in which we have virtually "nothing to look backward with pride and nothing to look forward with hope".

There is only one way to salvage the position. And that lies in the emergence of new political, social and cultural forces that could discover the true vision of India and outline its true destiny and assign Kashmir its rightful place in that vision and that destiny.

3.0 KASHMIR - ILLUSION AND REALITY

Those who do not learn from history are bound to repeat it." This observation comes to my mind every time the Government brings a resolution for extension of the President's rule in Jammu and Kashmir. The last such resolution was brought to Parliament on August 9, 1994. The Home Minister's speech, introducing the resolution and the Governor's report, had practically the same contents as on the previous occasions. All these speeches and reports reflect the same state of mind - the mind which prefers to live with illusions rather than with reality.

During the period intervening between two extensions, the Government has always been claiming improvement in the situation and singing the same song about the political process and elections. But what are the facts?

From the data collected by me from the replies to starred and unstarred questions during the just concluded session of Parliament, it emerged that the casualty figures had been going up. In 1990, 1,177 persons were killed; in 1991, 1,393; in 1992, 1,909; and from January 1, 1993 to June 30, 1994, 3,964. If the figures of abduction, kidnapping, attacks on security forces and other incidents related to terrorism are tabulated, the same trend would be visible.

During the last six months alone, 102 security personnel and 526 civilians were killed, 145 persons were kidnapped and the security forces were subjected to heavy firing and grenade attacks 1,275 times. In this period, Doda, too, came under the vicious grip of terrorism.

Encounter

As in last year, rockets were fired at this year's Independence Day function at Srinagar. On August 13, the militants, in the heart of the capital, engaged the security forces in a pitched encounter for practically the whole day. In this gun battle, the BSF lost a commanding officer and five jawans.

The murder of Dr Qazi Nissar on June 20 and the virtual refusal of the Government servants posted in the Valley to do any work connected with the Amarnath Yatra (August 13-21) also show the way the wind is blowing. The bomb explosion in a Jammu bus on August 25, which resulted in the death of ten persons, including eight children, points to the same direction.

At the time of every extension, I have been raising a few basic questions. Why has terrorism been increasing both in scale and ferocity? Why are persons like Qazi Nissar still being murdered? Why do people respond to the calls for general strikes by militant outfits? Why is not the Government tackling forces of subversion which are being continuously fuelled by the ISI to continue internal disorder and incipient aggression?

Loyalty

The answer to these and allied questions, which the Government has always side-tracked, is that the truth has never been and is still not being, faced in Kashmir. The truth is that the loyalty of a large number of public servants has been subverted; the truth is that no one is trying to rebuild the collapsed structure of civil administration; the truth is that the initiative is being allowed to rest with the militants and the Government is persisting with its permissive attitude.

Take, for instance, the Hazratbal incident of October/November, 1993. In this case the Government first surrendered its option, at the time of cordon, by providing food to the militants; then it surrendered its laws by releasing 62 persons who had been waging a "war against the State", in conspiracy with a foreign power- and now it has surrendered its prestige by removing the 'bunkers' for the retention of which it had been insisting for the last ten months. Clearly, such a weak response would add to the

belligerency of the militants and would have the same impact as was caused by the simultaneous release of 70 hard-core militants in September/December, 1989, by Dr Farooq Abdullah's Government.

The extent to which the Government has been trapped in its own confused web would be evident from the way it has been dealing with Yasin Malik who is a principal accused not only in the kidnapping (December 8, 1989) of Rubaiya Sayeed but also in the killing of four innocent Indian Air Force officers (January 24, 1994). Is it not in itself a tragedy of monumental proportion that the Indian State, whom Jawaharlal Nehru vowed to make "mighty in thoughts, mighty in deeds, mighty in culture, and mighty in service of humanity", is today looking to persons like Yasin Malik in resolving the Kashmir problem, instead of setting right its own mooring?

Is it not paradoxical that whereas 134 personnel of the security forces have been punished for "excesses", not even a single militant involved in serious crimes has been convicted, and the "designated court" set up by me in early 1990 at Jammu for speedy and effective prosecution, was made dysfunctional under political pressures of petty interests? Is it not a naivety of its own kind to talk of elections in the Valley, when practically every functionary of the State is afraid of raising his head above the parapet wall and when pro-Pakistan and pro-independence elements are being allowed to inject, through media and subversive literature heavy doses of militancy in the social environment of the Valley?

Too late

When on August 15, 1994, I heard the Prime Minister tell Pakistan, from the ramparts of the Red Fort, "With you, without you, in spite of you, Kashmir is an integral part of India, and this will not change," I was reminded of the following words of General Douglas MacArthur: "The history of failure in war can be summed up in two words: Too late, too late in comprehending the deadly purpose of a potential enemy; too late in realising the mortal danger; too late in preparedness; too late in uniting all possible forces for resistance."

If Government had adopted a firm line in 1988-89, when the present game of subversion, terrorism and low-intensity war was started by Pakistan, it would not have been in the sorry mess in which it finds itself today and the people of Kashmir and the rest of India would not have paid such a heavy price both in human and financial terms. Even now it is doubtful whether the Prime Minister's words would be matched by deeds. The Government has been, and is still, sending conflicting signals. Even the three main functionaries - the Home Minister, the Minister of State for Home Affairs and the Governor, J&K - have been speaking with different voices.

Performance

What is needed is a clear, consistent and comprehensive policy which not only makes up for the deficiency of late response but also demonstrates that promises would be followed by performance. This policy should, as I have been emphasising since 1990, include putting sustained pressure on pro-Pakistani militants, concentrating on rebuilding the civil administration; dealing effectively with subversive elements within the services; eliminating indirect help to militants by way of civil works and "appeasement-recruitment", prosecuting the disinformers in specific cases; activating the 'designated court' at Jammu for speedy trial of the accused involved in killing and kidnapping; taking initiative to unearth arms and ammunition; organising counter-guerrilla groups; keeping all the while an honourable line of retreat open for new leadership not involved in heinous crimes; and, finally bringing home to all concerned that, if fair gestures are not responded to, Article 370, which is being currently misused to cause internal subversion and facilitate external intervention, would be abrogated.

"While truth", says Emile Zola, "is buried underground, it grows, it chokes, it gathers such an explosive force that one day it bursts out, it blows everything up with it." Since the Government and Parliament have not been facing the truth in Kashmir it has been hitting them in the face after every six months. And, if the present attitude persists, it would continue to hit them in the coming months also. Every

extension means not merely constitutional extension of the President's rule; it also means extension of India's wishful thinking.

(Courtesy: Hindustan Times)

4.0 OPEN LETTER TO MS. ROBIN RAPHEL

Your recent statement (December 13, 1996) on 'Maximum Autonomy to Kashmir' has impelled me to write this open letter to you.

This statement has left the uncomfortable impression that you are not averse to the idea of a torn and tormented India an India that is continuously at war with itself - In the name of artificially whipped up, impractical and divisive autonomies.

I am driven to write this letter to place on record my apprehensions about the political architecture that you are advocating for Kashmir as I sincerely believe that "the only thing necessary for triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing".

You say, "We really very much hope the Government of India remembers it has made a commitment to maximum autonomy to Kashmir and does not let that slip to the back-burner because, if they do that, you are in danger of having the whole problem under the surface again. "What you are doing virtually amounts to pouring oil on the furnace which is already burning intensely.



Is it wrong to infer that you will not allow the burner to cool?

And does this inference not get reinforced by your observation:

"The election in Kashmir is not going to resolve the underlying question of Kashmir as a disputed territory. The question still remains."

May I remind you that Kashmir's relationship with the rest of India did not begin in 1947 and it does not rest only on the Instrument of Accession and Articles 1 and 370 of the Constitution of India.

It is a relationship of mind and soul that has existed from time immemorial and found ample expression in common avenues of intellect and emotions, poetry and literature, philosophy and outlook.

Every green pasture that you walk around in Kashmir, every silvery peak that you watch from pleasurable distance, every stream that sings its song by your side, every enchanting lake that you come across now and then and every little town and city that you visit has some signpost or other of this deep and abiding relationship.

Even when Islam came to Kashmir, it did not alter the ethos of the common folk. Most of the Islamic teachings were just grafted on Vedantic beliefs and thoughts. The central message of Kashmir's patron saint and founder of the Rishi order, Sheikh Nuruddin Noorani, was:

There is one God/But with a hundred names;/There is not a single blade of grass/Which does not worship Him. What do you think is post-1947 India? Is it a mere collection of states and territories or something more than that? Is it a new political reality only or also an expression of a common heritage and history, a common culture, a common set of values that have nursed and nurtured the same way of life for ages in diverse circumstances and in different regions?

The answer to these questions is clear. The new republic is a new constitutional entity. But it is not merely that.

It is also a historical and cultural continuity - a continuity that is unique, that mocks at the ravages of time and has remained unperturbed by the scars and strains left by the upheavals of history.

And all parts of the country, including Kashmir, are a part of this continuity. You very well know that Kashmir already enjoys a high degree of autonomy. There is a vast area which is under the exclusive jurisdiction of the state government. It includes a substantial portion of the Concurrent List of the Constitution and also residuary powers. The citizens of India are not ipse facto the citizens of Jammu and Kashmir. Even if they have been residing in the state for years, they cannot acquire the right of settlement and hold property in the state.

They have no right to vote in the elections to the state assembly or the local bodies or the panchayats. No declaration of financial emergency can be made with regard to J & K as Article 360 of the Indian Constitution has not been applied to it.

Article 365, which authorises the President of India to issue directions to the state government in exercise of the executive power of the Union, has also not been extended to J&K.

In fact, quite a few of the problems of present-day Kashmir are due not to insufficiency but a surfeit of powers.

You see your own history.

A vast chunk of America - the southern states - wanted to secede.

You did not allow that.

You fought a civil war.

Both North and South suffered a great deal.

There was hardly a household that did not undergo trials and tribulations.

But you kept the country united.

Today, you are a great power - the world's number one.

You call Abraham Lincoln the 'Father of the Nation'.

And rightly so.

You take pride in your great melting pot.

And there is every justification for doing it.

How can then you, of all people, encourage small sovereignties and unworkable autonomies which are bound to cause tensions, turmoil and bloodshed?

Why do you forget the long-term implications for India if it should succumb to momentary pressures?

Has the partition of India solved any problem?

Has it served either the Muslims or the Hindus?

On the contrary, it has kept both in perpetual poverty.

Old animosities have sharpened and new animosities have arisen.

Had India remained united, it would have, like the U.S., become a great power - a model of dynamism and resurgence, a country in which hunger and backwardness would have been forgotten like a bad dream.

You need to spare a moment or two for the noble ideology which inspired the great American visionaries and think why it is necessary for the United States to create its nests of power in Kashmir even at the cost of weakening a nation whose heritage of compassion, contentment and catholicity could contribute a great deal in building a new culture and civilisation all over the world.

Woodrow Wilson once said:

"If I have forgotten in any degree what America was intended for, I thank God if you remind me," The purpose of this letter is to serve as a reminder.

Reproduced from: The Times of India - January 11, 1997

5.0 AUTONOMY: NUTS AND BOLTS OF OPERATIONAL REALITY

Those who demand pre-1952/53 status or advocate maximum autonomy for Jammu and Kashmir take care not to address themselves to concrete questions. They remain conveniently vague and show little respect to the practical implications of their stand. For instance, they suppress the fact that, in the absence of full financial integration with the Union, Jammu and Kashmir would have no resource at all for development. It is the Union finances that provide the entire funds for the State's five-year Plans and also for a substantial part of the non-Plan expenditure. According to the Reserve Bank bulletin (December, 1995; Appendix I & II), per capita Central assistance for 1994-95 was Rs. 3,010 for J&K, as against Rs. 190 for Bihar, Rs. 305 for Rajasthan and Rs. 341 for UP. In case of J&K, 90 per cent of this assistance is in the shape of grants and 10 per cent as loans; while for the four States mentioned above, it is 30 per cent grants and 70 per cent loans. Likewise, per capita non-Plan grants for J&K in the same year comes to Rs. 720 while it is Rs. 72 for Bihar, Rs. 23 for Tamil Nadu, Rs. 81 for Rajasthan and Rs. 23 for UP. All this shows the tremendous gains that have flowed to the J&K State from the financial link with the Union. What will happen if this link is now ended? Who will fill in the gap? Will it not be the United States and the other Western powers? And will it not place Kashmir virtually in their hands?

Take, likewise, another example - extension of Article 356 of the Indian Constitution which enables the President of India to bring the State under his rule. It is often said that this extension constitutes an encroachment on the State's autonomy. But no one asks a connected question: If there is a breakdown of the constitutional machinery in the State or if the State refuses to comply with any direction concerning Defence, Foreign Affairs or Communications, what will happen in the absence of President's powers under Article 356? Suppose the Governor has the corresponding powers; then does it not mean that the President would have to submit to the decision of the Governor, his own appointee? Again, suppose the Governor is made Sadar-e-Riyasat, who is elected by the State Assembly, then, would not granting the final say to the Sadar-e-Riyasat amount to subordinating the Union to the State? And if the President withdraws his recognition of the Sadar-e-Riyasat but the State Assembly once again elects the same person as Sadar-e-Riyasat, will it not cause a constitutional deadlock?

If funds continue to flow to Kashmir from the Union, as at present, and it is allowed, as is being advocated in certain quarters, to have an exclusive say on subjects other than Defence, External Affairs and Communications, it could enact Islamic civil and criminal laws and even set up Shariat courts, on the same lines as has been done in Pakistan, and make it virtually a theocratic entity. Would not such a scenario do violence to the very preamble of our Constitution and also amount to secularism financing theocracy and that, too, propelled by forces of bigotry and fundamentalism?

The problem of Jammu and Kashmir has not been insufficiency but surfeit of powers. During 1977- 82, for example, Sheikh Abdullah established a sort of elective dictatorship in the State. He practically acted like a monarch of all that he surveyed. No one even checked him from doing what was, on the face of it, wrong. His recruitment of the erstwhile die-hard workers of the Plebiscite Front, the Al-Fatah and such other subversive organisations, in sensitive departments like police, was, obviously, fraught with grave risks to the security and stability of the State. And yet, he could go ahead unhindered either by the Governor of the State or by the Union Government. The Resettlement Act, 1982, legislated during Sheikh Abdullah's regime and formally enacted during Dr. Farooq Abdullah's time, showed what a vast area of power was available to the State Government.

It is not in the erosion of autonomy but in the erosion of earnestness and sincerity that the seeds of numerous troubles of Kashmir are embedded. There are a great many instruments of power that are available to the State leaders but they have been used less in the service of the State than in the service of the self.

The crucial questions that need to be asked of the singers of the autonomy ode are: Do they want more autonomy to enact a legislation like the one referred to above? In what way is any welfare work or work of development held up for want of powers? Where is any law or executive order or judicial pronouncement that has undermined the personality or identity of Kashmir or altered its sculpture or spiritual landscape? What will happen in the absence of flow of Union funds? If such funds continue to flow, how will it be ensured that a secular entity does not feed and prop up a theocratic one? And how will the challenge of fundamentalist forces from within be met?

If one shakes off the impact of what is dished out to the Press and published in abundance, one would discover that the advocates of more autonomy or of pre-1952/53 position are misleading the people, planting untenable and unworkable notions on their minds and arousing false and dangerous hopes. They are, wittingly or unwittingly, strengthening those forces which have been working, both beneath and above the surface from 1948 onwards, for securing secession and establishing 'Sheikhdom' in Kashmir in one form or the other. For what is implied by 'more autonomy' today will mean 'independence' tomorrow. Such a development would have serious repercussions and ultimately lead to Balkanisation of India with all its bloody and tumultuous consequences.

It is, indeed, tragic that to serve their ends of power quite a few of our leaders are confusing the people, dividing them and indirectly facilitating the task of those who want to see a torn and tormented India, an India that is continuously at war with itself.

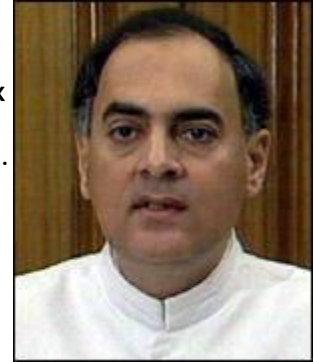
[Courtesy: The Hindustan Times]

6.0 LETTER TO MR. RAJIV GANDHI

April 21, 1990

Dear Shri Rajiv Gandhi,

You have virtually forced me to write this open letter to you. For, all along, I have persistently tried to keep myself away from party politics and to use whatever little talent and energy I might have to do some creative and constructive work, as was done recently in regard to the management and improvement of Mata Vaishno Devi shrine complex and to help in bringing about a sort of cultural renaissance without which our fast decaying institutions cannot be nursed back to health. At the moment, the nobler purposes of these institutions, be they in the sphere of executive, legislature or judiciary etc. have been sapped and the soul of justice and truth sucked out of them by the politics of expediency.



You and your friends like Dr. Farooq Abdullah are, however, bent upon painting a false picture before the nation in regard to Kashmir. Your senior party men like Shiv Shankar and N.K.P. Salve have, apparently at your behest, been using the forum of the Parliament for building an atmosphere of prejudice against me. The former raked up a fourteen-year old incident of Turkman Gate and the latter a press interview an interview that I never gave to hurl a barrage of accusations of communalism against my person. Mani Shankar Iyer, too, has been dipping his poisonous darts in the columns of some magazines. I, however, chose to suffer in silence all the slings and arrows of this outrageous armoury of disinformations. Only rarely did I try to correct gross distortions by sending letters to the editors of newspapers and magazines. My intention was to remain content with a book, an academic and historic venture which, I believed, I owed to the nation and to history.

But the other day some friends showed to me press clippings of your comments in the election meetings in Rajasthan.

That, I thought, was the limit. I realised that, unless I checked your intentional distortions, you would spread false impression about me throughout the country during the course of your election campaign.

WARNING SIGNALS: Need I remind you that from the beginning of 1988, I had started sending "Warning Signals" to you about the gathering storm in Kashmir? But you and the power wielders around you had neither the time, nor the inclination, nor the vision, to see these signals. They were so clear, so pointed, that to ignore them was to commit sins of true historical proportions.

To recapitulate and to serve as illustrations, I would refer to a few of these signals. In August 1988, after analysing the current and undercurrents, I had summed up the position thus: "The drum-beater of parochialism and fundamentalism are working overtime. Subversion is on the increase. The shadows of events from across the border are lengthening. Lethal weapons have come in. More may be on the way". In April 1989, I had desperately pleaded for immediate action I said: "The situation is fast deteriorating. It has almost reached a point of no return. For the last five days, there have been large-scale violence, arson, firing, hartals, casualties and what not. Things have truly fallen apart. Talking of the Irish crisis, British Prime Minister Disraeli had said: "It is potatoes one day and Pope the next". Similar is the present position in Kashmir. Yesterday, it was Maqbool Bhat; today it is Satanic Verses; Tomorrow it will be repression day and the day after it will be something else. The Chief Minister stands isolated. He has already fallen-politically as well as administratively; perhaps, only constitutional rites remain to be performed. His clutches are too soiled and rickety to support him. Personal aberrations have also eroded

his public standing. The situation calls for effective intervention. Today may be timely, tomorrow may be too late". Again, in May, I expressed my growing anxiety: 'What is still more worrying is that every victory of subversionists is swelling their ranks, and the animosity is being diverted against the central authorities". But you chose not to do anything. Your inaction was mystifying. Equally mystifying was your reaction to my appointment for the second term. How could I suddenly become communal, anti-muslim and what not ?

When I resigned in July 1989, there was no rancour. You wanted me to fight, as your party candidate, election for the South Delhi Lok Sabha seat. Since I had general revulsion for the type of politics which out country had, by and large, come to breed, I declined the offer. If you had any serious reservation about my accepting the offer of J and K Governorship for the second term, you could have adopted the straight forward course and apprised me of your views. I would have thought twice before going into a situation which had virtually reached a point of no return. There would have been no need for you to resort to false accusations.

May be you do not consider truth and consistency as virtues. May be you believe that the words inscribed on our national emblem - Satyameva Jayate - are mere words without meaning and significance for motivating the nation to proceed in the right direction and build a true and just India by true and just means. Perhaps power is all that matters to you - power by whichever means and at whatever cost.

REALITY: In regard to the conditions prevailing before and after my arrival on the scene, you and your collaborators have been perverting reality. The truth is that before the imposition of Governor's rule on January 19, 1990, there was a total mental surrender. Even prior to the day (December 8, 1989) of Dr. Rubaiye Sayeed's kidnapping, when the eagle of terrorism swooped the state with full fury, 1600 violent incidents, including 351 bomb blasts had taken place in eleven months. Then between January 1 and January 19, 1990, there were as many as 319 violent acts - 21 armed attacks, 114 bomb blasts, 112 arsons, and 72 incidents of mob violence.

You, perhaps, never cared to know that all the components of the power structure had been virtually taken over by the subversives. For example, when Shabir Ahmed Shah was arrested in September 1989, on the Intelligence Bureau's tip-off, Srinagar Deputy Commissioner flatly refused to sign the warrant of detention. Anantnag Deputy Commissioner adopted the same attitude. The Advocate-General did not appear before the Court to represent the state case. He tried to pass on the responsibility to the Additional Advocate General and the Government council. They, too, did not appear.

Do you not remember what happened on the day of Lok Sabha poll in November 22, 1989 ? In a translating gesture, TV sets were placed near some of the polling booths with placards reading "anyone who will cast his vote will get this". No one in the administration of Dr. Farooq Abdullah took any step to remove such symbols of defiance if authority.

Let me remind you that Sopore is the hometown of Gulam Rasool Kar, who was at that time a Cabinet Minister in the State Government. It is also the hometown of the Chairman of the Legislative Council, Habibullah, and also of the former National Conference MP and Cabinet Minister, Abdul Shah Vakil. Yet only five votes were cast in Sopore town. In Pattan, an area supposedly under the influence of Iftikar Hussain Ansari, the then Congress (I) Minister, not a single vote was cast. Such was the commitment and standing of your leaders and collaborators in the State.

And you still thought that subversion and terrorism could be fought with such political and administrative instruments.

Around that point of time, when the police set-up was getting rapidly demoralised, when intelligence was fast drying up, when infiltration in services was bringing stories of subversives plan like TOPAC, your protage, Dr. Farooq Abdullah was either going abroad or releasing 70, hardcore and highly motivated

terrorists who were trained in the handling of dangerous weapons, who had contacts at the highest level in Pakistan occupied Kashmir, who knew all the devious routes of going to and returning from Pakistan and whose detention had been approved by the three member advisory board presided over by the Chief Justice. Their simultaneous release enabled them to occupy key positions in the network of subversion and terrorism and to complete the chain which took them again to Pakistan to bring arms to indulge in killings and kidnappings and other acts of terrorism. For example, one of the released persons, Mohd. Daud Khan of Ganderbal, became the Deputy Commander-in-Chief of a terrorist outfit, Al-Bakar, and took a leading part in organising a force of 2,500 Kashmiri Youths. Who is to be blamed for all the heinous crimes subsequently committed by these released 70 terrorists? I would leave this question answered by the people to whom you are talking about the "Jagmohan Factor".

The truth, supported by preponderance of evidence, is that before January 19, 1990, the terrorist had become the real ruler. The ground had been yielded to him to such an extent that dominated the public mind. He could virtually swim like a fish in the sea. Would it matter if the sea was subsequently surrounded?

LABELLING ANTI-MUSLIM: In your attempt to hide all your sins of omission and commission in Kashmir and as a part of your small politics which can not go beyond dividing people and creating vote banks, you took special pains to demolish all regards and respects which the Kashmiri masses, including the Muslim youth, had developed for me during my first term from April 26, 1984, to July 12, 1989. Against all facts, unassailable evidence, and your own precious pronouncements, you started me labelling me as anti-Muslim.

May I, in this connection, also invite your attention to three of the important suggestions made in my book, Rebuilding Shahjahanabad: The Walled City of Delhi. One pertained to the creation of the green velvet between Jama Masjid and Red Fort; the second to the construction of a road linking Parliament House with the Jama Masjid complex, and the third to the setting up of a second Shahjahanabad in the Mata Sundari road-Minto road complex, reflecting the synthetic culture of the city, its traditional as well as its modern texture. Could such suggestions I ask you, come of an anti-Muslim mind?

FORUM OF PARLIAMENT: How you and your associates use the forum of Parliament undermine my standing amongst the Kashmiri Muslims, was evident from what N.K.P. Salve, MP, did in the Rajya Sabha on May 25, 1990.

Referring to the so called interview to the Bombay Weekly, THE CURRENT - an interview which I never gave - Salve chose wholly unjustified expressions; "There was a patent and palpable attitude of very disconcerting communal bias and, therefore, he (Governor) was happy under the garb of eliminating the terrorist, the saboteurs and the culprits, in eliminating the whole community as it were; now the Governor has himself given profuse and unabashed vent to his malicious malignity, hate and extreme dislike, branding every member of a particular community as a militant".

I know Salve. I do not think, if left to himself, he would have done what he did. Clearly, he was goaded to say something which was against his training and background. But the elementary precaution which any jurist, at least a jurist of Salve's eminence, would have taken, was to first check up whether any such interview weekly had been given by me, and if so, whether the remarks attributed to me were actually made. The unseemly haste was itself revealing. The issue was raised on May 25, while the weekly was dated May 26 June 2, 1990. You yourself rushed a letter to the President on May 25, on the basis of the interview that in reality did not exist. You explained that V.P. Singh had appointed a person with "Rabid Communalist Opinion as Governor. You also got your letter widely published on May 25 itself. Since your party men did not allow me to have my say in the Rajya Sabha, even when an opportunity came my way to speak on the subject, I was left with no other option but to file a 20 Lakhs damage suit against the Current Weekly in the Delhi High Court. The case may take a long time and I may donate the

damages, if and when awarded, to charity, but I intend sparing no effort to expose all those who have played dirty roles in the disinformation-drama.

ARTICLE-370: You created a scene on March 7, 1990, at the time of the visit of the All Party Committee to Srinagar, and made it a point to convey to the people in 1986 I wanted to have Article 370 abrogated. At that critical juncture, when I was fighting the forces of terrorism with my back to the wall beginning to turn the corner after frustrating the sinister designs of the subversives from January 26, 1990 onwards, you thought it appropriate to cause hostility against me by tearing the facts out of context. Whether this act of yours was responsible or irresponsible, I would leave to the nation to decide.

What I had really pointed out in August-September 1986 was: 'Article 370 is nothing but a breeding ground for the parasites at the heart of the paradise. It skins the poor. It deceives them with its mirage. It lines the pockets of the "power elites". It fans the ego of the new sultans, in essence, it creates a land without justice, a land full of crudities and contradictions. It props up politics of deception, duplicity and demagogy. It breeds the microbes of subversion. It keeps alive the unwholesome legacy of the two-nation theory. It suffocates the very idea of India and fogs the very vision of a great social and cultural crucible from Kashmir to Kanyakumari. It could be an epicentre of a violent earth-quake, the tremors of which would be felt all over the country with unforeseen consequences.

I had argued, 'The fundamental aspect which has been lost sight of in the controversy for deletion or retention of Article 370 is its misuses. Over the years, it has become an instrument of exploitation in the hands of the ruling political elites and other vested interests in bureaucracy, business, judiciary and bar. Apart from the politicians, the richer classes have found it convenient to amass wealth and not allow healthy financial legislation to come to the State. The provisions of the Wealth Tax, the Urban Land Ceiling Act, the Gift Tax etc, and other beneficial laws of the Union have not been allowed to be operated in the State under the cover of Article 370. The common people are prevented from realising that Article 370 is actually keeping them impoverished and denying them justice and also their due share in the economic advancement.'

My stand was that the poor people of Kashmir had been exploited under the protective wall of Article 370 and that the correct position needed to be explained to them. I had made a number of suggestions in this regard and also in regard to the reform and reorganisation of the institutional framework. But all these were ignored. A great opportunity was missed.

Subsequent events have reinforced my views that Article 370 and its by product, the separate Constitution of Jammu and Kashmir must go, not only because it is legally and constitutionally feasible to do so, but also because larger and more basic considerations of our past history and contemporary life require it. The Article merely facilitates the growth and continuation of corrupt oligarchies. It puts false notions in the minds of the youth. It gives rise to regional tensions and conflicts and even the autonomy assumed to be available is not attainable in practice. The distinct personality and cultural identity of Kashmir can be safeguarded without this Article. It is socially regressive and causes situations in which women lose their right if they marry non-State subjects and persons staying for over 44 years in the State are denied elementary human and democratic rights. And, above all, it does not fit into the reality and requirement of India and its vast and varied span. What India needs today is not petty sovereignties that would sap its spirit and aspirations and turn it into small "banana-republics" in the hands of 'tin-pot dictators', but a new social, political and cultural crucible in which values of truth and rectitude, of fairness and justice, and of compassion and catholicity, are melted, purified and moulded into a vigorous and vibrant set-up which provides real freedom, real democracy and real resurgence to all.

I must also point out that when other States in the Union ask for greater autonomy, they do not mean separation of identities. They really want decentralisation and devolution of power, so that administrative and development work is done speedily and the quality of service to the people improves. In Kashmir, the demand for retaining Article 370 with all its 'pristine purity', that is, without the alleged dilution that has

taken place since 1953, stems from different motivation. It emanates from a clever strategy to remain away from the mainstream, to set up a separate fiefdom, to fly a separate flag, to have a Prime Minister rather than a Chief Minister, and Sadr-i-Riyasat instead of a Governor, and to secure greater power and patronage, not for the good of the masses, not for serving the cause of peace and progress or for attaining unity amidst diversity, but for serving the interests of 'new elites', the 'new Sheikhs'.

All those aspiring to be the custadians of the vote-banks continue to say that Article 370 is a matter of faith. But they do not proceed further. They do not ask themselves: What does this faith mean? What is its rationale ? Would not bringing the State within the full framework of Indian Constitution give brighter lustre and sharper teeth to this faith and make it more just and meaningful ?

In a similar strain, expressions like 'historical necessity' and 'autonomy' are talked about. What do these mean in practice ? Does historical necessity mean that you include, on paper, Kashmir in the Indian Union by one hand at a huge cost and give it back, in practice, by another hand on the golden platter ? And what does autonomy or so called pre-1953 or pre- 1947 position imply ? Would it not amount to the Kashmiri leadership say in: 'you will send and I will spend; you will have no say even if I build a corrupt and callous oligarchy and cause a situation in which Damocles' sword of secession could be kept hanging on your head' ?

KASHMIRI PANDITS: You and the like of you have made India a country which has lost capacity to be true and just. Anyone trying to be fair is dubbed communal. The case of the Kashmiri Pandits bears eloquent testimony to this fact.

Whatever be the vicissitudes of the Kashmiri Pandits' history and whatever unkind quirks their fate might have brought to them in the past, these all pale into insignificance in comparison to what is happening to them at present. The grim tragedy is compounded by the equally grim irony that one of the most intelligent subtle, versatile, and proud community of the country is being virtually reduced to extinction in free India. It is suffering not under the fanatic zeal of mediaeval Sultans like Sikander or under the tyrannical regime of Afghan Governors, but under the supposedly secular rule of leaders like you, V.P. Singh and others who unabashed search for personal and political power is symbolised by calculated disregard of the Kashmiri migrants' current miserable plight and the terrible future that stares in their eyes. And to fill their cup of pain and anguish, there are bodies like 'Committee for Initiative on Kashmir' which are over-anxious and over active to rub salt into their wounds, and to label anyone who wants to stand by them in their hour of distress as communal.

In a soft, superficial, permissive and, in many ways, cruel India which has the tragic distinction of creating over one lakh refugees from its own flesh and blood and then casting them aside like masterless cattle to fend for themselves on the busy and heartless avenues of soulless cities, chances for Kashmiri Pandits to survive as a distinct community are next to nothing. Split, scattered and deserted practically by all, they stand today all alone, looking hopelessly at a leaking, rudderless, boat at their feat and extremely rough and tumultuous sea to face before they can reach a safe shore across to plant their feet firmly on an assured future.

The deep crisis through which the Kashmiri migrants, or for that matter, the entire Kashmir, is passing is really the crisis of Indian values - the perversion, in practice, of its constitutional, political, social and moral norms. If I visited the camps of the refugees and tried to extend the firm hand of justice to a community in pain, if I instructed that, instead of cash doles, the migrant Government servants should be given leave salary, and if I conceded the demand of a widow of the person brutally killed by a terrorist, for allotment of a house on payment, I became communal, a known anti-Muslim, about whom concocted stories were planted in the press. If, on the other hand, someone falsely accused the Indian Army and the Governor's administration, if he assailed Jagmohan in particular, of giving inducements through provisions of plots and trucks, without giving particulars either of plots or of trucks, his accusations got published all over the press, his reports were flaunted in national and international forums and were

copiously quoted in Parliament by the members of your party and he was labelled as secular and progressive and champion of human rights and what not. Hard Evidence about 'Jagmohan Factor'. I do not like to refer to anything that looks like indulging in self-praise. But not to let you get away with your calculated campaign of disinformation, about Jagmohan communal factor, I must invite attention to some hard evidence about what the people of the Valley actually thought about me before you and your proteges started the smear campaign on my appointment for the second term.

Your principal prop of current politics of Kashmir, Dr. Farooq Abdullah, was not to be left behind in the drive launched to create an 'anti-Muslim' image of mine. In his interview published in the Times of India of August 30, 1990, he said, "A known anti-Muslim was appointed as Governor of a Muslim majority state". How untrue, how unfair, was the propaganda, should be obvious from the fact that on November 7, 1986, at the time of his swearing-in-ceremony, Dr. Farooq Abdullah, in a public speech for which the records exist, said: "Governor Sahib, we should need you very badly. It is, indeed, amazing that such remarkable work could be done by you in a short time through an imbecile and faction-ridden bureaucracy. If today three ballot boxes are kept - one for the National Conference, one for the Congress and one for you, your ballot box would be full while the other two ballot boxes would be empty".

The misfortune of our country is that we have leaders like Dr. Farooq Abdullah who have no regard for facts or truth and whose superficiality is matched only by their unprincipled politics.

Incidentally, did it not strike you that Dr. Farooq was virtually accusing your late mother of being anti-Muslim because she was the Prime Minister when, in April 1984, a 'known anti-Muslims' was appointed for the first term, as 'Governor of a Muslim majority State' ?

Apparently in consultation with you, Dr. Farooq Abdullah, on February 15, 1990, issued a written statement to the press in Urdu in which he inter alia, said, "The Governor, in the personification of 'Hallaqu' and 'Changez Khan', is bent upon converting the valley into a vast graveyard. On account of continuous curfew since January 20, it is difficult to say how many hundreds of people have become victim of the bullets of the army and paramilitary forces, and in this general slaughter how many hundreds of houses have been destroyed. At this moment, when Kashmiris are witnessing their beloved country being converted into a vast graveyard. I appeal to the national and international upholders of humanity to intervene in Kashmir and have an international inquiry made into the general slaughter of Kashmiris at the hands of army and paramilitary forces".

Here is your 'patriot' calling Kashmir "Aziz Wattan", suggesting a separate country. Here is your 'national leader' asking for an international inquiry into the general slaughter of the Kashmiris by the Indian Army and paramilitary forces. Here is your 'responsible friend' speaking about the continuous curfew for 25 days in the valley and his consequent inability to find out many 'hundreds of innocent and unarmed Kashmiris' had been massacred and how many hundreds of Kashmiri houses razed to the ground, although he knew perfectly well that there had been a number of days when there was no day- curfew, partially or wholly, and the authorities had brought out the list of casualties, about 40 upto February 16, and were daily asking the public to provide with the additional names, if they had any, so that correction in the official list could be made. Here is an erstwhile Chief Minister who did not care to explain how 'innocent and unarmed' people were ruthlessly shooting down IAF officers, BSF jawans, senior officers of the Television and Telecommunications Department and young men in the streets; and how, while inciting people through lengthy and fiery statements, he did not find a single word to condemn such brutal murders.

Is the nation not entitled to know why you have not disowned such unfortunate behaviour on the part of Dr. Farooq Abdullah? And how do you account for his recent statement as published in The Times of India of February 7, 1991: 'I directed my partymen to lie low, go across the border, get training in arms handling; do anything but not get caught by Jagmohan' ?

Stabbing me in the back at personal level, perhaps, did not matter. But by keeping the pot boiling, you your proteges prolonged the agony of Kashmir and caused many more deaths and much more destruction. The politics of unscrupulousness was brought to its lowest depth.

ROOTS: You once said, 'I do not read history; I make history'. Apparently, you do not know that those who happen to make history without reading it, usually make bad history. They cannot understand the undercurrents and the fundamental forces that really shape the course of events and determine the ultimate destiny of a nation.

In the absence of historical perspective, you and the like of you never perceived the roots and tendrils which gave rise to the current crop of separatism and subversion in Kashmir. Poisonous seeds were persistently planted in the Kashmir psyche. And these were liberally fertilised. Those of you whose obligation it was to stop these plantations and their fertilisation, were not aware of even the elementary lesson of history; to compromise with the evil was only to rear greater evil; to ignore the inconvenient reality was only to compound it; to bow before the bully was only to invite the butcher the next day.

I could cite scores of cases to support my contention. Here I would restrict myself to only two examples. Softness and Surrender. On October 2, 1988, Mahatma Gandhi's birthday his statue was to be installed in the new High Court complex at Srinagar. The function had been announced. The Chief Justice of India, R.S. Pathak, was to do the formal installation. But a few Muslim lawyers objected. They threatened to cause disturbance at the time of the function. The Chief Minister gave in, almost willingly, to the bullying tactics. The function was cancelled.

What are the implications of what happened ? A secular Kashmir, part of a secular India, could not have, even in its highest seat of justice, a statue of the Father of the Nation, of a sage, who laid down his life for communal harmony. Who was the person spearheading the move against the installation ? It was none other than Mohd. Shafi Bhat, an advocate of the J and K High Court and an active number of the National Conference, who was later on given party ticket for Srinagar Lok Sabha seat in the elections held in November 1989 and with whom you kept warm company during your visit to Srinagar on March 7, 1990, to create as many difficulties as possible for Governor's administration.

At that time there was National Conference (F) Congress (I) Ministry in office. Such was its lack of adherence to principles, such was the character of Congressmen who formed part of the Ministry and such was its disposition to cling to power that not even a little finger was raised when the function was cancelled.

The bully's appetite could not have been whetted better. Intimidation could not have secured better results. The troublemakers could not have perceived a more casual and non-committed adversary. Was it not natural for them to nurture higher ambitions and think that more spectacular results could be achieved by deploying a more aggressive and threatening strategy ? Only a naive would believe that in the context of the Kashmir situation, softness and surrender on basic principles would not act as an invitation to terrorism and militancy.

The Union Government enacted the Religious Institutions (Prevention of Misuse) Act, 1988. It was made applicable to all the States of the Union except J and K. Because of Article 370, concurrence of the State Government was needed for extension of this law to the State. But the same was not given. Why ? Because J and K is different what an argument for having a law which aimed at eradication of misuse of religious premises for political purposes.

Nowhere was this law needed more than in the State of J and K. Nowhere were religious places misused more than here. Nowhere were seeds of fanaticism and fundamentalism sown every Friday more assiduously than from the pulpits of the mosques here. Nowhere was it preached more regularly than here that Indian democracy was un-Islamic, Indian secularism was un-Islamic and Indian socialism was

un-Islamic. And yet, neither the State Government which was ruled by two supposedly secular parties, nor the Union Government took the matter seriously. What intrigued the most was that the law which was considered good for 100 million Muslims in other parts of India, was not considered good for 40 lakh Muslims of Kashmir.

What was the use of the nationalist forces ruling the country when they would not act in national interest at all, when they remained mental slaves of the politics of communalism; when they were inclined to place reliance on words and not on deeds; when they did not lead, but succumbed; when they encouraged, and not defeated, separatist elements; when, instead of building a new society strong in human and spiritual values, they did everything, wittingly or unwittingly, to repair, renovate and strengthen the old decaying and smelly citadel of obscurantism; and when they invariably gave precedence to expediency over the basic goals and principles of our Constitution ? What could be the result of all this ? Did it require any unusual insight to understand where such fipurious forces would take us ?

I leave it to the well-wishers of the nation to consider, without any political or personal bias, a basic question. How was it that Dr. Farooq was calling me Hallaqu and Changez Khan, and you were travelling all the way to Srinagar to 'expose' me as anti-Article 370, anti-Kashmiri and anti-Muslim and, at the same time, Miss Benazir Bhutto was vowing to tear me to pieces - 'Jagmohan ko Bhag-Bhag Mohan Kar Denge'?

There are many other facets of Kashmir's truth which lie buried underneath the heaps of disinformation and also of superficiality and shallowness. These days I am busy in an attempt to remove some of these heaps. One day, I hope, the country will acquire the true perspective of the problem. The Kashmiri masses would also realise that I was their greatest well-wisher. I wanted to save them permanently from the exploitative oligarches and also from the machinations of religious 'Czars' and forces of obscurantism. You have already committed the sin of letting down the Bharat Mata in Kashmir. Now do not add to it another sin of letting down the other Mata also. There is, after all, some power above. Conscious of her. She may condone your negligence. But she would not condone your sin of blaming an innocent person for what were your own faults, particularly when he had been persistently reminding you of your obligations.

So far as I am concerned, I am content with my gloomy pride of having done the correct thing in Kashmir. True, I seemingly and, perhaps, temporarily, lost the goodwill of some of the locals. But I was not seeking a certificate from anyone. I had gone for the second term to do a national duty. The country's polity and administration have assumed such a character that it has become incapable of solving from its roots, any serious problem. Elections have virtually lost all meaning. And these would continue to be meaningless until and unless Indian democracy and its constitutional structure acquires a healthy cultural base, a pure soul and soil, from which the seed of justice, truth and selfless service could sprout and blossom into a Great Tree providing shade and shelter from Kanyakumari to Kashmir.

Currently, the inner light is gone, and we are being led virtually by blind men with lanterns in their hands. We stumble from one crisis to another. As a poet says:

*It has happened
and it goes on happening
and it will happen again.*

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely,

Jagmohan

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