



मिळुचार MILCHAR

April - May 2003



Maa Sharika Temple,
Hari Parvat, Village Anangpur, Faridabad.

Between Ourselves

... M.L.Mattoo, President

Namaskar.

- Recently when I was in Delhi, I met Shri M.K.Kaw, President, All India Kashmiri Samaj (AIKS) and other office bearers, for an interaction and updating myself as Vice President AIKS - Western zone. It was a fruitful meeting wherein various subjects regarding AIKS and community at large came up for discussion. Mumbai Association being considered as very important and prominent unit of AIKS, had a special mention by Mr Kaw. Recently AIKS has issued letters to all units, giving details of the duties assigned to them, so that the Zones could play an important role, for the betterment of the community. As one of the founder members of AIKS, when first All India meeting took place in Mumbai, I furnished some framework regarding the role, AIKS could play at the national level as an Apex body and accordingly its constitution was framed. We are sure that the organisation, under the leadership of Shri M.K.Kaw will move forward to achieve its set agenda.

Lately AIKS Executive has met Mr. Manmohan Singh MP, Mr. N. N. Vohra, Interlocutor and Jt. Secretary, Kashmir Affairs, Govt. of India and placed its views and suggestions before them on behalf of all Kashmiri Pandits. From our side, we pledge all our support to the Samaj, which we are sure, will be the authoritative voice of the KP community as a whole.

- It is very sad to state that we have lost our Vice President and a veteran social worker Smt. Shanta Kapoor after a short illness. Shantaji had been a trustee of the Kashmiri Pandits' Association for a long time. She was a source of inspiration to young and old in our Organisation. It will take a long time to fill up the vacuum created by her demise.

We have also lost another community member Shri Mohan Kaul of Andheri after a sudden heart attack. A Film Editor by profession, Shri Kaul also produced some serials. We all pay our homage to both of them and also pray for peace to their souls. On behalf of KPA, I convey our heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families. May God give them strength to bear the loss?

- I wish to pen down a few lines for a good friend Shri Maharaj Kishen Raina, one of our Trustees and Coordinating Editor, MILCHAR. I happened to be introduced to him way back in 1968, when he was in search of a job in Mumbai. I had totally forgotten the event till his migration to this place in 1995 when he reminded me of the same. Whatever we express or write about Raina Sahab will not be commensurate with his qualities. He is doing community proud by carrying out the life membership drive which has risen to more than 600 now. He, on his own sends messages across the world regarding KPA / Lalla-Ded activities. He has been contributing to, compiling and co-editing MILCHAR for years, which he has transformed into a quality magazine. As we all know, he is well versed in Kashmiri language, and has been writing short stories and poetry in Kashmiri for a long time. *'Dalvanzun'*, a humorous poem composed by him which was sung by Dolce Bhan at the recently held Annual Cultural Show, as also the satirical poem *'Ladi Shah'* which he himself recited at the show, were profusely applauded. ZAN programme is his prodigy and his contributions to our two internet sites i.e. www.zaan.net and www.milchar.com in association with Sunil Fotedar of Texas, are

really praiseworthy. He is ever helpful to all and we wish him all the success in his missions.

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Editorial

... P.N.Wali

Inter-caste Marriages

I have a letter from Mr. M.N.Ambardar of Satara, suggesting that the Milchar, while giving news about community marriages, should blackout the inter-caste marriages, for they are basically not desirable. A simple suggestion like this raises many issues and for which answers may not be easy. It is a fact that we want our boys and girls to get married within the community. This will preserve the value system we imbibe from our forefathers. It will help continue a way of life we cherish. We are all for it. Yet we find that inter-caste marriages are taking place. We saw a spurt in these immediately after the exodus. May be this was a reaction to the events of times or a consequence of a new found freedom. There was some thaw for few years but last one year witnessed an unusual increase in such marriages. Why inter-caste marriages take place at all? At a certain time in a young person's life, a very strong feeling of attraction for the other sex takes place. At this stage he or she is attracted to a particular individual so that tying the nuptial knot remains the only option inspite of disapproval or even opposition by the family. It is human nature and not something particular in our community only. But what we find interesting in our community, is that a large number of parents after initial disapproval, eventually accept it. They soon give their blessings for the marriage and try to make it look like any other marriage. Probably this is genuine pragmatism. There is no gain in rejecting the inevitable. Better accept it as normal and not lose the son or daughter in the process. Call it being liberal if you want to, or being wise, if you prefer. But often it is the right course and is appreciated also. Interestingly our community has also a history of welcoming the other caste boy or girl into our fold with open arms and genuine affection. The boys and girls from the other caste have found us very affectionate and often return the affection in equal measure. This makes our family more peaceful and lovable inspite of an outsider coming in. Girls married into KP families have been found often sport a Dejhor . Even girls married out of the community, also sometimes wear it. Our culture appears to be strong enough to assimilate the new entrants. They might perhaps even imbibe the community value system. We recently witnessed a strong debate within the Parsi community on this subject. Parsis strongly oppose marital intrusions into their community. A view is being expressed that it needs to change. The present system appears to be working to their disadvantage. The community is shrinking through its exclusiveness. A large section of Parsis are advocating a change. To this extent, the KPs look to be more broad-minded. The question still remains as to why a KP boy or girl wants a partner from outside his own community? Don't we have good boys or girls within the community who could meet the aspirations of our young souls? We have enough of them but there is no interaction among them. They meet boys and girls of other community in the college, building society, work-place and so on. As we said, the attraction is instinctual and physical, and meeting physically is a precondition. We as parents have failed to provide a platform for our youngsters to meet and know each other. It is the failure of elders at one stage which becomes their problem at another stage. Can't we strengthen the community contact points and provide necessary opportunity to our

youngsters? The other defense against this trend is in creating a sense of pride in belonging to the community in our youngsters. How much we tell them about our community, its achievements, its stalwarts, its contribution to world philosophy and knowledge, etc? Again it is the elders who have to do it. Do it, when children are young and at an impressionable age. Till the time we don't build the defenses as suggested above, we will have to accept the situation as it is. Blacking them out is no solution. We will continue to welcome them into our fold with the hope that they will imbibe our way of life and thinking and perpetuate it.

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From the Pages of History

... J.N. Kachroo

Kashmiri Loses Her Independence

Babar founded Mughal rule in India in 1526 AD. His mission was clear to him; he aimed at building an empire. Kashmir, occupying an important strategic position, could not escape his notice. The beauty of the Valley with its bracing climate had an additional attraction to the Mughals, inhabitants of a cold country. But subduing Kashmir was not an easy cake-walk for the Mughals. After facing set backs more than once and suffering a little humiliation, Mughals finally claimed Kashmir to be a part of their empire only in 1586, i.e. 60 years after the occupation of Delhi throne. This success came to the then Mughal emperor not by using his prowess but a strategy.

In 1526, Kashmir was under the rule of Sultan Mohammad Shah (IV). Anarchy prevailed in the kingdom due to the fighting among petty nobles and also rivalry among the scions and their successors of Zain-ul-Abidin. Among the nobles, two prominent persons Kazi Chak and Malik Abdal Magrey played an important role.

In 1527, Babar sent a force under Kushak Beg and Ali Beg to help Sikander in securing the throne by overthrowing the ruling prince. The Kashmiris saw through the trick which was to bring Kashmir under the Mughal hegemony. As a result, the otherwise rival feudal lords of the Valley rallied under the banner of Kazi Chak, whose patriotism was stirred. He was at Naushera then, having been driven out of the Valley by his powerful rival, Abdal Magrey. Kazi Chak collected a force comprising the hill tribes and exiled Kashmiri soldiers, put his 18 year old son at its head and conducted a successful operation against the mighty Mughals, who had to withdraw ignominiously without entering the Valley.

Kazi Chak became a hero. He was appointed as Wazir. However, his rival Abdal Magrey took shelter under Babar and induced him to make another attempt. Babar agreed but used a different excuse. Kazi Chak, removing Muhammad Shah from the throne, had put up his son Prince Ibrahim on the throne. Babar got Nazuk Shah, a scion of Shah Mir declared as Sultan of Kashmir. Some nobles helped him and with the help of the Mughal army, defeated the forces of Kazi Chak and enthroned Nazuk Shah. Only after one year in 1530, Muhammad Shah was restored. Magrey quickly sensed the resentment of the nobles against the presence of the Mughal soldiers who were sent back from Kashmir. Thus Babar failed a second time in bringing Kashmir under his sway.

The Mughals made a third attempt during Humayun's rule. A strong Mughal force of 3000 horse under Mehram Beg entered Srinagar without much resistance. But soon the Kashmiri nobles patched up their differences again and invited Kazi Chak to lead them to drive the invader out of their native land. The Mughals could not stand the pressure mounted by the Kashmiris. They agreed to quit the Valley on promise of a safe passage to the Punjab.

Mirza Haider Dughlat, an adventurer from Tashkent and a close relative of Babar tried his luck in 1533 but met with the combined resistance of Kazi Chak and Abdal Magrey. However, Mirza Dughlat helped by Abdal Magrey occupied Srinagar in 1540 AD and placed Nazuk Shah on the throne. Dughlat thus exercised influence on the Sultan and

increased the influence of the Mughals for eleven years till his death. But the Sultans retained independence.

Meanwhile, the last Sultan ruler, Habib Shah was removed from the throne of Kashmir and replaced by Ghazi Chak. The rule of Kashmir passed on to Chaks in 1561.

During early years of Akbar's rule, Shamas Raina, a local noble helped Abdul Mali, a favourite of Humayun, to invade Kashmir, but was defeated by Ghazi Chak. Kashmir continued to be independent.

Hussain Shah Chak ascended the throne of Kashmir in 1563 AD. Chaks were the followers of Shia faith. Helped and instigated by the Imperial government at Agra, Shia-Suni conflict took a violent turn. Akbar made a diplomatic move. He sent two envoys, both of Shia faith to Kashmir to ask the Chak ruler Hussain to accept the Mughal suzerainty. The Chak ruler refused and sent away the envoys with presents for the King. Akbar made another diplomatic attempt in 1578 AD, but not much was achieved.

In 1579, Yusuf Shah Chak ascended the throne. A lover of music, Yusuf married a simple but romantic girl Zooni, later known as Habba Khatoon. She was a singer and a poetess. People lost their confidence in their king. His wise minister Mohammad Bahaqi took over the charge of the ruler and forced Yusuf Shah to flee to seek Akbar's help. Finding it a great opportunity, Akbar sent Mughal soldiers under Raja Man Singh. But Yusuf Chak realised his shortsighted act and persuaded Man Singh not to proceed to Srinagar, but himself went at the head of a small army of 4000 from hill tribes. He succeeded in capturing the throne once again.

Akbar made more than one attempt to bring Yusuf Shah to attend his court but all in vain.

Thus Kashmir maintained her freedom and the mighty Mughals failed to win Kashmir either militarily or diplomatically, right from 1526 to 1586 AD. Throughout the period, the Kashmiris gave proof of their patriotism and exhibited a wonderful ability of facing the enemy unitedly, inspite of mutual differences.

The determined Akbar, the great Mughal Emperor now decided to make the final bid to annexe Kashmir by means fair or foul.

On December 20, 1585, a strong force of 500 horse under the command of Raja Bhagwan Das marched into Kashmir via Jhelum valley route. Yusuf Shah felt nervous and thought it futile to offer any resistance. But his youthful and dashing son, Yaqub put up a stiff resistance. Bhagwan Das's benumbed force could make no progress and entered into negotiation with Yusuf Shah. It was agreed that 1) The Mughals would withdraw, 2) Yusuf Shah would retain the throne, 3) Coins would be struck and Khutba read in the name of the emperor, 4) Yusuf Shah was persuaded to travel to Attock to receive regards from the emperor and where the treaty would be ratified. Though advised by his son not to go, Yusuf Shah travelled only to be imprisoned there. Bhagwan Das thought it as a betrayal and even attempted suicide. When Akbar reached Lahore, he handed over Yusuf Shah to Raja Tudarmal. After two and a half years, he was given a *Mansab* of 500 horse, sent to Bihar and not allowed to go back. In 1592, he died there and was buried in Patna.

Back home, Yaqub Shah continued to rule as the Sultan of Kashmir, disregarding the terms of agreement and striking coins in his name. But soon, he, because of a ruthless policy of terror, lost the confidence of his people. Sheikh Yaqub Sarfi, a poet, a respected Suni, secured the support of a large number of Kashmiri nobles, and invited

Akbar to come to Kashmir to put an end to the prevailing lawlessness. Assured of local help and support, the Triumphant Mughals entered Srinagar on 14 October 1586.

Thus Kashmir lost its independence to become a province of the Mughal Empire.

Yaqub Shah made futile attempts to regain his throne. It took three years for the Mughal Subedhars to restore complete order. On 14th October 1589, Akbar, the great Mughal entered Srinagar to a rousing reception by all sections of the people who were sick of the lawlessness and intrigues of the nobles.

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Kashmir Imbroglia

... Balbir K. Punj

The Secular Conspiracy

The formation of Pakistan was a “momentous” episode in the history of the sub-continent, though executed in a faulty manner. But we neither fully comprehended the forces behind this epoch nor raised the ideological and political bulwark needed to counter its long-time consequences.

Two recent events of unequal magnitude enforced in mind this problem, we refused to fix in 1947. One was Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee’s call from Srinagar for bilateral dialogue with Pakistan. And the other was the formal release of a book by Deputy Prime Minister L.K.Advani. Titled Religious Demography of India, it was brought out by the Centre for Political Studies, Chennai.

Making his recent visit to Srinagar an occasion, the Prime Minister extended olive branch to Pakistan. The gesture has seemingly gone down well with both Islamabad and the NDA including the BJP. If there is anything against us, it is the past involving the two countries. Such talks, so far, have ended in failure, exacerbating the situation. India has been stabbed in the back by Pakistan whenever it has taken well meaning measures like Prime Minister Vajpayee’s Lahore bus ride in 1999 and the 2001 ceasefire. But, we must be optimistic.

Though the issues are intertwined, the solution to the Kashmir problem is no longer a priority as is the “peace in the Valley”. Today, the government’s priority is to put an end to the cross LoC terrorism and the Pakistan sponsored proxy war with a heavy hand and disseminate the fruits of development in the Valley.

India won a military victory against Pakistan at Dhaka in 1971, but could not capitalise on that advantage to bring an end to the Kashmir problem. That was the only occasion when Kashmir was really a bilateral issue between India and Pakistan. At that time Pakistan, handicapped by a US arms embargo (for genocide by the Pakistan Army in Bangladesh), faced the real threat of not only losing Kashmir but also disintegrating into several splinter states like Sindh, Balochistan and Pakhtunkhwa. The mock chivalry of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto’s speeches in those days only highlighted how real his fear was.

But which Kashmir do we refer to when we speak of Kashmiri peace? The total area of J&K is 2,222,236 sq. kms, out of which 78,114 sq. kms are illegally occupied by Pakistan and 42,685 sq. kms by China, of which Pakistan illegally handed over 5,130 sq. kms to China. However, for all practical purposes we have given our hopes of reclaiming that territory from Pakistan and China. The Indian government or the media never raises this issue of the independence movement in Balwaristan (in PoK), thinking, it would irk Islamabad further.

All that we are fighting for, rather defending is the Kashmir we still retain. After thousands of their fellow men and women were killed, the 300,000 Kashmiri Pandits expelled from the Valley are leading a sub-human life in the refugee camps at Jammu and Delhi. Their properties have been legally undersold or illegally occupied in a manner similar to Bangladesh’s Enemy Property. The well planned Nadimarg (Pulwama) massacre of March 23, is prompting the exodus of the residual Hindus from the Valley.

The local Muslim populace has declined to guarantee their safety. The message is quite clear: "Sir, kindly leave and leave every square inch of your land-space for the cause of Dar-ul-Islam".

But when we talk of "Kashmir peace" or "Kashmir solution" we do not take into consideration the Kashmiri Pandits. With their ancestral properties gone, their return and rehabilitation is quite unlikely. The exodus of the Kashmiri Pandits is not only a human tragedy but also a civilisational holocaust. They were the original and culturally unalloyed inheritors of Kashmir. If the Muslims could be a part of the "Kashmiriyat" of the Hindus - which is as old as the land itself - why could the Hindus not be a part of the "Kashmiriyat" of the Muslims? Can one think of Hindus expelling Muslims from a place where the latter are a minority? Then, there would not have been any Muslim left in India. Article 370 was meant to "protect the uniqueness of the state". This Article has been protected at every cost and pretext but the true inheritors of Kashmir are languishing unprotected in the refugee camps of Jammu and Delhi. What an irony!

Since ancient times, Kashmir has been the centre of Shaiva tradition and famed seat of Vedic learning. It is for this reason alone that the Kashmiri Hindus are referred to as Pandits (or scholars). Thus the Kashmiri Pandits are the originally unalloyed people of the land. Their exit thus marks the loss of Kashmir's soul. Moreover, it also raises the question that if Hindus are not safe as community even in India, where else will they be? The Muslims of Kashmir are the descendants of those Kashmiri Pandits who converted to Islam mostly under the threat of sword or in the hope of gaining some favour during the Muslim era. Sheikh Abdullah admits in his autobiography, *Atish-e-Chinar* (Fire amongst Chinar), that his great-grand father was a Kashmiri Pandit, Bal Mukund Kaul. But this great-grandson of a converted Kashmiri Pandit refused to identify himself as an Indian. He always referred to himself only as a Kashmiri. In league with another Kaul viz. Nehru, who was ashamed of his Hindu identity, he turned Kashmir into his personal fiefdom.

But are we also not a part to this tragedy? Jagmohan pithily observes in his highly acclaimed book 'My Frozen Turbulence in Kashmir'. "We denounced the Two-Nation theory, proclaimed to the world that in India religion did not constitute the basis of separation or distinction. Ironically, it is we who are applying the Two-Nation theory in Kashmir. And we are doing it in the most suicidal manner. Pakistan, which owes its birth to the Two-Nation theory, exists, after all, with its own resources. But here in Kashmir, Article 370 and the issue of autonomy are designed to be manipulated in such a way that a virtual Sheikdom or Sultanate, or mini-Pakistan, has been nurtured with the Indian money. Unfortunately, we have neither the inclination nor the depth perception to see through the game."

But where are the imperceptible roots of this palpable tragedy? Braving the secession of East Pakistan, Zulfikar Bhutto said in 1971, "Pakistan is an ideal. It will last even if it is physically destroyed. We are prepared for the decimation of 120 million people. We will then begin with a new and build a new Pakistan". Thus he comes very close to saying that Pakistan exists first in people's mind, then as a political unit. The concretisation of the political vision of Paksitan took place in the Thirties and the Forties. But tragedy has its roots in the negation of Indianism. Not even one percent of Indian Muslims came from outside India, say Arabia or Central Asia, but are converts from Hinduism and Buddhism, mostly under duress. But on conversion their mindset became

chain reaction of the Arab imperialism. That is the reason why several thousand Indian Muslims quitting British India (a Dar-ul-harab or land of the enemy) had chosen to migrate (hijrat) to Dar-ul-Islam Afghanistan, out of which only 20,000 were allowed to settle. A large number of Shias from Lucknow, including the descendants of the Nawab of Awadh, chose to migrate to Karbala (now Iraq). At the root of this is the denial of a pre-Islamic identity.

The second event was the formal release by Deputy Prime Minister L. K. Advani on April 20, of a highly statistical book 'Religious Demography of India'. It is a mammoth study of the census available for 110 years (1881-1991) of the sub-continent by A.P.Joshi, M.D.Srinivas and J. K. Bajaj for the Centre for Policy Studies, Chennai. Advani, however, did not agree with the author's categorisation of religions as Indian religions and others (like Christianity, Islam) and said that the Indian nationhood had suffered no devalorisation due to the 'unfortunate' Partition.

Generally we treat Partition as unfortunate. But let's see how 'fortunate' Hindus would have ended up if there were no Partition in 1947. The study observes : "The proportion of Indian religionists in the population of India (Indian sub-continent) has declined by 11 percentage points during the period of 110 years for which census information is available. Indian religionists formed 79.32 percent of the population in 1881 and 68.03 percent in 1991. This is an extra-ordinary high decline to take place in just about a century; at the peak of the Mughal rule at the time of Akbar, after nearly 400 years of Islamic domination, number of Muslims in India was said to be no more than one sixth the population. If the trend to decline seen during 1881-1991 continues, then the proportion of Indian religionists in India is likely to fall below 50 percent, early in the later half of the 21st century." So, is the fear misplaced that if there were no partition India would have become a Lebanon for Hindus? India remains secular and pluralistic because the decisive majority comprises Hindus.

So, partition in a way stayed off the Islamisation of India. But how does one cope with the large scale infiltration of illegal Bangladeshi immigrants into West Bengal and Assam, people who could turn these provinces to "Greater Bangladesh"? The deputy PM has rightly called for the repealing of the IMDT Act, which in effect is a 'secular' conspiracy to dismember and Islamise India in parts, progressively. And notably, in an Islamic state, secularism or communism will also have no place. A typical example of this are the communists who actively worked towards the formation of Pakistan in the forties, provided Jinnah all the intellectual arsenal he ever needed, but were themselves cleansed from the Islamic state which was contemptuous of an impure object.

** Balbir K. Punj is a Rajya Sabha MP. This article is reproduced from Free Press Journal.*

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Sweet & Sour

... Tribhuwan N. Bhan

Unforgettable Incident

Advice: While posted at Srinagar in 1947, one of my uncles whom we fondly called Lala, paid a courtesy call at my house at Karan Nagar. My father Late Pt. Gobind ji Bhan, was always proud of him and held him in high esteem as a self-made courageous man, full of guts. That evening, Lala and my father kept talking to each other for a long time. He was describing to him, the various anecdotes connected with his tenure during the World War II. As it became quite late and dark, my father asked him to stay on for dinner. He agreed. After dinner, my old aunt Kakni asked him how he would go back. Lala replied, " I came by car and shall go by the same car". "But where is your driver?" asked Kakni. "I don't have a driver. I drive myself", replied Lala. There was surprise and confusion written deep on Kakni's face. "Oh my God! It is pitch dark outside. Roads are deserted. Avoid the ditches and drive slowly. There are stray dogs on the road. They keep on barking. See that you do not lose control of your car. Are you a good driver anyway? Please be careful." Not even for a moment did Lala give her the feeling that he was not taking her advice seriously. Instead he gave her the impression that she was giving him the most valuable and timely advice.

Just imagine the concern shown by an old lady for a young man and giving him instructions out of genuine love. For Lala, driving a car was just a child's play, but he accepted her advice with all humility. That was the care and concern, really felt by elders those days, and that was the esteem and respect in which the younger generation held the elders. They were taken as the wise people of the society, whether they had been to any school or not. Whatever they said was absolute wisdom, to be followed word by word; nay letter by letter.

And the person, who was keeping his hands folded together and listening to Kakni in rapt attention, was none other than Flt. Lt. J.N.Dhar, posted at Srinagar aerodrome during the 1947 conflict (Qabaili Raid).

In the year 1947, Pakistani tribals, so called Qabailies, raided Kashmir. Indian government came to the rescue of the people of Kashmir by sending troops to fight back the raiders. Srinagar aerodrome therefore assumed a lot of strategic importance as it was the only airport where planes could land, carrying soldiers and supplies. Mr. Dhar was specially deputed to this aerodrome on instructions of the Prime Minister Pt. Jawahar Lal Nehru, since he was born, brought up and educated in Kashmir and was therefore very familiar with the geography of the surroundings of the aerodrome, which was so important at such a moment of crisis. Besides, he had joined Royal Air Force in 1944 and was trained as a pilot at Kohat, now in Pakistan. One of his distinguished colleagues then was Mr. Espee Engineer, who rose to become an Air Marshal in the Indian Air Force.

Farooq Abdullah: I was studying in class eighth at Biscoe Memorial High School, Srinagar. Our English teacher was Mr. N.L.Bakaya. Mr. Bakaya was a very straight-forward man, a strict disciplinarian and a perfectionist, who brooked no nonsense from anyone. He called a spade a spade, not a shovel.

One day, we had submitted to him our English essay books for correction. After his correction, he was distributing the books in the class as per the name on the cover of each book. He came across a book with the name of Farooq Abdullah written on it. He held the book in his hand and asked the class, "Who is Farooq Abdullah here?" Everyone was amazed and looked in the direction of Farooq. "So you are Farooq Abdullah", he told Farooq, "But you happen to be Farooq Sheikh. According to me, that is your name. Your brothers have names Tariq Sheikh and Mustafa Kamal Sheikh. Likewise, your name is Farooq Sheikh." The rest is history.

Today everyone knows that person as Dr. Farooq Abdullah and not as Dr. Farooq Sheikh. What has been the motive behind this change? To gain a well-planned political advantage or just a whimsical fancy?

JRD's gesture: Some years ago, I had been to Taj Intercontinental Hotel, Mumbai to attend a wedding reception. After the reception, two of my friends and I were walking towards the main exit door on the ground floor. There we noticed a group of gentlemen talking to each other in hushed tones. From their behavior, I could presume that they were waiting for some dignitary. Out of curiosity, I asked one of the attendants as to who was expected. From him, I could gather that there was a meeting of the Board of Directors of Tatas at the hotel. The meeting was over and Mr. J.R.D.Tata would be coming down soon. As we had never seen Mr. Tata at close range, we decided to wait and have a glimpse of this great man. He came accompanied by few others, exchanged smiles with everyone and shook hands with all. He stood at the glass door waiting for his car. All the while, I tried to be as near him as possible. The grey Mercedes car drove up to the steps. The driver came out. He opened the rear door for Mr. Tata to take his seat. But to everyone's amazement, he spoke to his driver these words, which I can never forget. "It is quite late in the night. You have been driving almost the whole day. By now you must be tired. Now I will drive home myself. You sit behind."

That was the care, compassion and consideration this great man showered even on the most humble being in his organisation. This one incident speaks volumes about the personality of Mr. J.R.D.Tata, the uncrowned king of an industrial empire. By taking the driver's seat, he no doubt enhanced his own stature, in the eyes of the beholders. Mr. Tata's qualities of thoughtfulness and empathy were indeed unparalleled and are worthy of emulation. In this world of 'sorry scheme of things entire', it is only when one is fortunate to have memorable experience involving humane people like Mr. Tata, that one realises; there are still some beautiful nooks and corners here.

When in solitude, I reminisce the noble gesture of that wonderful man, affectionately called JEH by his colleagues, a tear runs down my cheek.

Sacred Thread: For a Brahmin, the most important event in his life is the 'Thread ceremony' called Yagneopavit. The ceremony involves shaving the head of the boy followed by a Yagna accompanied by chanting of Vedic mantras by a group of priests. After all the rituals are over, the sacred thread is put round the neck of the young boy. A Brahmin has to have this sacred thread on him till his death. It also acquires special significance on various momentous occasions like birthday, marriage, engagement etc. On these occasions, certain pujas are performed wherein the sacred thread is partly round one's neck and partly covering the open palm of the person. The priest sprinkles holy

water on it, starting from the palm, and carries on the process till the whole thread is partly wet. This is repeated a number of times during any important puja in a Brahmin's life.

I was married in May 1962. Not used to wearing the sacred thread and knowing that I will be required to have one on me during the pujas at the bride's house, I took care to acquire one clandestinely and started wearing it a week before the wedding day, so that I could get used to having it on me as a part of my outfit. Every now and then, I would feel it to make sure it was safe in its place.

Finally the day dawned, I left my house with the Barat for bride's place. After the customary welcome at the main gate of the house, I was supposed to stand at the inner entrance to the main house, where I had to have the eldest gent of my family by my side. Here, the priests from groom's and bride's side encircling us, had to perform the puja before entering the house. Naturally, I was the centre of attraction. The puja commenced. I was told by one of the priests to take out the sacred thread called *Jenou* and keep it out on the arm. Confidently, I put my hand under my shirt collar to display it to the priests. I took my hand round my throat and neck several times but could not locate the *Janou*. It was not there! It was missing!! A hush descended on all and sundry. I felt as if the floor was giving way under my feet. Blood froze in my veins. I must have turned death pale. More than myself, my old uncle who was standing by my side felt shamefully embarrassed. More so, because he was known in the society as a deeply religious man. That was the only time he was immensely upset with me. Very angrily, he whispered in my years, "You have put me to shame. It is all right for you since you do not know the value of being a Brahmin, but you have put me to absolute shame." Quickly, one of the priests succeeded in acquiring a *Jenou* for me and I put it round my neck. The puja continued. All the rituals like going round the sacred fire seven times were over. Accompanied by my bride and others, I returned home at Karan Nagar. I went to the bathroom to have a wash. And there I found the wonderful *Jenou*, which had put me to the worst embarrassment, hanging from one of the pegs on the wall. With a mixture of feelings, I gazed and gazed at it deeply. It seemed to laugh at me with sadistic delight and tell me, "The day you acquired me, you took a pledge that you shall always keep me on you, round your neck and we two would be inseparable. You broke that pledge. The helpless situation in which you found yourself today, is the retribution you rightly deserved".

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Project ZAAN

4th Kashmiri Quiz Contest ZAAN

On Sunday, 19th Oct. 2003 at Kashyap Bhawan

Features of the Contest for Children

1. Story Telling / Recitation (Kashmiri Only)

Age Group ~ **Upto 12 Years**

Time ~ 3 Minutes . **Prizes to be won ~3**

2. Elocution ~ Language No Bar

Time: 3 Minutes. Prizes in each group ~3

i) Age Group ~ 12 Years to 18 Years

Topic: My Favourite Tirath in Kashmir

ii) Age Group ~ 18 Years to 25 Years

Topic: Kashmir - The Land of Pilgrimages

3. Quiz Contest :

Prizes in each group ~3

i) Age Group ~ Upto 12 Years

(Kashmiri names for Parts of Body, Common Fruits, Vegetables & Basic Relations)

ii) Age Group ~ 12 Years to 18 Years

(Quiz based on the information given through Information Digests, Volume 1, 2 & 4)

iii) Age Group ~ 18 Years to 25 Years

(Quiz based on the information given through Information Digests, Volume 1, 2 & 4)

4. Reading Devanagari-Kashmiri from Basic Reader for Kashmiri Language-Modified Version.*

Prizes in each group ~3

i) Age Group ~ Upto 12 Years

(Reading Words in Devanagari-Kashmiri)

ii) Age Group ~ 12 Years to 18 Years

(Reading Sentences in Devanagari-Kashmiri)

iii) Age Group ~ 18 Years to 25 Years

(Reading a Passage in Devanagari-Kashmiri)

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- Modified version of the 'Basic Reader' will be made available at the '[Kashmiri Language Workshop](#)', date of which will be communicated separately. Entry Form for the Contest will be printed in next issue of Milchar.

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Stories for the Children

... M.K. Raina

Three Questions

Thousands of years ago, there was a state in Bharatvarsha, called Batsala. Arunagiri was its capital. Maharaja Abhayadhiraj was the king of Batsala. He was a noble and pious man. Maharani Vasundhara was his queen. She was very beautiful. Maharaja had won her in a *swayamvara* from among a dozen competitors. He had fought and killed a bison bare handed in the *swayamvara*. People of Batsala were very happy with the king and the queen. They would always pray for their long life.

For a long time after their marriage, Maharani Vasundhara did not bear any child. Medical advice was sought from the royal physicians but to no avail. Rituals were performed in order to appease the deities at the instance of learned Brahmins, but they were of no consequence. Maharani Vasundhara was desperate. Maharaja, though himself very upset, consoled her saying that it was probably the wish of gods. Still they prayed fervently for a child, successor to the throne.

It was early Spring. Maharaja and Maharani were taking a stroll along the stream flowing by the side of the Rajmahal. Mahamantri Sura was following them at a distance. Maharaja heard some noises coming from the gate of the Rajmahal. He asked Sura to look into the matter. On reaching the gate, Mahamantri found the royal guards questioning an old man. The old man was requesting them to permit him to meet the king but the guards were not relenting. Mahamantri asked him who he was and why he wanted to meet the king. Old man said that he had come from a distant place only to meet the Maharaja and reveal a secret to him. Convinced that the old man had something important to reveal, Mahamantri let him in and promised him an audience with the king. Maharaja Abhayadhiraj was informed about the old man's request. He issued instructions that the visitor be immediately brought to the Durbar. He also asked his Mahamantri and other ministers to be present.

The old man was escorted by the chief of royal guards. He saluted the Maharaja in the customary manner. Maharaja welcomed him and asked him who he was and why did he want to meet him? The old man, introduced himself as Joginda, a yogi. He said, he hailed from a distant place and that he wanted to make some revelations.

Yogi Joginda continued, "I have been meeting the people who visit your country off and on and through them, I learned about your nobility and generosity. I always desired to meet you but was waiting for an opportune time. When I heard that you have no child to succeed your throne, I was pained. I decided to invoke the blessings of Lord Brahma through *Tapasya*. At the conclusion of my *Tapasya*, Lord Brahma appeared in my dream. He directed me to perform a 100 days uninterrupted *Yagna*, to grant me a wish, which I did. Now I have come here to tell you that Maharani Vasundhara will soon be blessed with a male child."

Cries of joy rent the air. Maharaja and Maharani were thrilled at this revelation. Maharaja directed his Mahamantri to arrange free meals for a hundred Brahmins. He gifted Joginda precious gems and requested him to stay on as royal guest for a week. Maharaja personally looked after his comforts. Yogi Joginda was moved at the

Maharaja's hospitality. While departing from the palace, he said, "I shall come again to bless the child."

In due course of time, Maharani Vasundhara gave birth to a beautiful male child. Rajmahal was illuminated and a free *langar* was arranged for the poor for three days. Sweets were distributed among the friends and Rajmahal staff. A special emissary was sent to yogi Joginda to inform him about birth of the child.

On his arrival at Rajmahal, Joginda performed puja along with Maharaja Abhayadhiraj. He blessed the child and named him 'Arisudana'. Joginda told the king and the queen, "Rajkumar Arisudana should be crowned as successor to the throne only when he attains the age of twenty. At the age of fifteen, he should be sent outside the territory of Batsala in the garb of an ordinary person to seek answers to the following three questions. 1) In what lies one's lasting pleasure? 2) What is that which a woman loves most? 3) What is that which one can not hide for long? Rajkumar should be given a maximum period of five year's to seek the answers. He should be crowned as successor to the throne only if he gets all the answers right".

"And how do we know that he got the correct answers", asked Maharaja. Joginda took a piece of *bhojpatra*, wrote something on it and wrapped it in a piece of cloth. He made it into an amulet and handed it to the king. "Correct answers are written here. It should be opened only after the Rajkumar returns with the answers." Saying this, the yogi left. Maharaja secured the amulet in the treasury vaults and relaxed. His successor was before him. He had nothing to worry about, he thought. Rajkumar would definitely come up to his expectations and get the right answers.

Rajkumar Arisudana was brought up with lot of love and care. As he grew up, his parents told him about the yogi and his three questions. Rajkumar wanted to leave immediately but Maharaja and Maharani did not permit him as he had not attained the age of fifteen.

On the day of his 15th birthday, Rajkumar Arisudana rose early in the morning. He was given a ceremonious bath. He then performed puja in the royal temple along with his parents. A grand Durbar was organised on the occasion. He was seated on a rosewood pedestal in the centre of the Durbar Hall while Rajguru chanted mantras from the holy scriptures. *Tilak* was applied on his forehead. He was then dressed in white robes like that of a common man. Maharani offered him sweets and a glass of milk. Maharaja and Maharani, both garlanded him. A pouch containing fresh and dry fruits, *saamgri* for performing puja, *Gangajal* and an additional set of clothes, was placed on his shoulder. He was now set to leave the palace. Maharaja, Maharani, Mahamantri and Rajguru accompanied him. At the palace gate, two decorated horse driven carriages were waiting. Maharaja, Maharani and Rajkumar got seated in one and Mahamantri, Rajguru and others in the second. These carriages drove them towards river Surbhi. People of Arunagiri thronged both sides of the road leading to Surbhi. They were raising slogans and praying for safe return of the Rajkumar. On reaching the river bank, they all alighted from the carriages. Maharaja and Maharani embraced Arisudana and then led him to a boat decorated with flowers. Arisudana took the oar in his hands and waved to his parents and the people. Maharaja and Maharani stood motionless, tears trickling down their eyes. They watched their prince rowing away till he was out of their sight.

Next morning, as the Sun sent its first rays into the palace, Maharani woke up. As usual, she paid obeisance to the rising Sun. Arunagiri, the capital of her kingdom Batsala,

was so located as to receive the Sun's rays first. But this morning was different from other mornings. Rajkumar Arisudana's absence was being felt everywhere. Maharaja gathered courage or at least put a brave face but Maharani was deeply distressed. She could not hide her grief.

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Rajkumar Arisudana reached the outskirts of his kingdom in the afternoon. He tied his boat to a tree, threw away all flowers and garlands into the river, lest some one recognise him. He set on foot towards an unknown destination. While on his way, he came across a big shady tree and decided to take rest before proceeding further. He hung his pouch on a branch and laid down. He soon fell asleep.

When Rajkumar woke up, it was almost dusk. He noticed a stranger sitting beside him. The stranger asked him who he was? In order to keep his identity hidden he said, "I am Ananta. I hail from Batsala. I have set forth for the world outside my country in search of a livelihood. Who are you and what is this village called as?" The stranger said, "I am Anusuya. This village is 'Rudraloka'. I hail from a village called 'Chandri'. It is a day's journey from this place. I plan to spend the night in a temple nearby and leave for my village early morning. You can accompany me if you so wish." Rajkumar Arisudana, who was now Ananta, nodded in agreement. They reached the temple after a short walk. Both of them had some fruits and milk for dinner and decided to rest for the night.

Next morning, after taking a bath and performing puja in the temple, they left for Chandri village. On the way Ananta noticed, Anusuya was not as old as he appeared the previous night. He was probably middle aged, good looking, though lean. During their journey, they ate whatever Ananta carried in his pouch. They reached the village late in the evening. Anusuya asked Ananta, "Where do you go now? You must be very tired. Why don't you spend the night with me and leave for your destination tomorrow?" Ananta readily agreed.

On reaching his home, a small hut made of bamboo and hay, Anusuya called out to his wife. A young lady appeared at the door. Anusuya introduced her as Pushpalata, his wife and informed her that Ananta would be staying with them for the night. Ananta observed that the place, though clean, clearly reflected the poverty of its owner. Pushpalata, soon brought a bucket of hot water and washed their feet. She then served them a good meal. After dinner Ananta stretched himself on the floor and soon fell asleep.

On waking up next morning, Ananta did not find Anusuya around. He enquired with Pushpalata. She told him that Anusuya had left for the fields at dawn. She also told him that she had prepared flour cakes and soup for Anusuya, which she was going to deliver to him. Ananta thought he could give some relief to Pushpalata. So he volunteered to carry the food for Anusuya, to which Pushpalata agreed. She added some more cakes and soup for Ananta.

Anusuya was ploughing the land. He had only one ox and in place of the other, he had put himself. He was perspiring profusely. Looking at Anusuya's pathetic condition, Ananta thought to himself as to what could be the cause of Anusuya's extreme poverty? He became curious. He wanted to know more about Anusuya and help him. On seeing Ananta, Anusuya stopped and retired to a green patch. Both of them opened the pack and had the soup and the cakes. While they were having their lunch, Ananta broached upon the subject. Anusuya, finding a sympathetic friend, began narrating his life story.

(To be continued) • • • • •

Viewpoint

... Sanjay Kaul

Kashmiri Pandit Marriages - Present Scenario

It has been said that marriages are settled in heaven but performed on earth. From this, the importance of marriage should be clearly understood. Marriage is a sacred and pious ceremony. It is not just the meeting of two physical bodies. It is the meeting of two eternal souls. In the present day scenario, we seem to have failed in understanding the real meaning of marriage. Marriage is not a mere contract, which we enter into at our sweet will, only to terminate it later. The customary 'Manan Maal' which Kashmiri Pandits wear, represents the 'wedding by mutual acceptance' as against 'Jay Mala' representing 'wedding by conquest'.

Marriage is a sacred ceremony. One has to understand fully its meaning in terms of Shastras and our cultural heritage. 'Lagan' and 'Kanyadaan', the two words, are not just words, but carry deep religious and philosophical ethos. 'Lagan' represents the union of two people, both socially and legally, performed before a sacred fire, where religious mantras and hymns are enchanted in presence of a galaxy of witnesses from the groom's as well as the bride's sides. Here, the groom and the bride dedicate themselves to be equal partners in each other's joys and sorrows. 'Kanyadaan' is said to be the highest Daan which anybody on this earth can perform. The father gives away his daughter in 'daan' to the groom, who in turn is supposed to be her saviour for rest of her life.

With the change in times, we tend to ignore the sacred characteristics of our rituals. We seem to care less for the religious sanctities and more for the glare such functions now command.

According to an assessment, a considerable number of KP marriages are turning to be failures. The power of understanding one another, in case of husband and wife, is fast decreasing. Divorce cases are on the rise and extra-marital relationship tend to be more common. The situation prevailing now is very alarming and we need to take immediate steps to arrest this trend.

There are instances to show the falling standards of our 'Sanskars'. For quite some time, we have come across shocking incidents of boys settled abroad, marrying second time here, only to please their parents, thus showing scant regard for the sanctity of a marriage. This may be a 'kaam chalo' way of the boys to please their parents, but at what cost? We have also reasons to believe that in many cases, parents have lost contact with their children. Parents are expected to seek the views of their foreign based children in the matter of marriage, before trying to influence them with their own choice. Any excuse from the parents later that they were in complete darkness about the activities of their children, does not carry weight. They are equally responsible for the misdeeds of their children. The community as a whole is also expected to take a rigid stand against those indulging in such activities.

The marriage function of a Kashmiri Pandit is also getting modernised. We are fast imitating western culture and trying to outdo others in the matter of pomp and show. Our strict adherence to the schedule of activities listed in accordance with the religious scriptures, is fast vanishing, giving way to modernism and so called 'enlightenment'.

There is no regard for the auspicious times of Mahurat, Dvar Pooza, Lagan etc. At times, these are dismissed as medieval rituals. This can be one of the reasons why modern marriages turn to be a failure in many cases.

If we go a little back in times, say about two decades, we would observe most of the Baratis sitting all through the ceremony, or at least till end of the Lagan. The presence of people around, would not only add grace to the occasion, but also give the relatives and friends a chance to see if the groom or the bride were tense at any moment. Now, barring a few close relatives, no body bothers to stay back, even if they have plenty of time to do so. Relatives and close friends have also a pious duty to perform at the time of 'Posh Pooza'. This is the occasion when both the bride and the groom are worshipped and flowers showered upon them, after their union as husband and wife. In the present times, the ritual is mostly performed by the members of the two families only. The only people in abundance and those remaining till end of the session are camera and video people.

The most common scene at a marriage hall is to discuss the Menu. 'How did you like the new dish introduced for the first time?' 'How many Stalls have been laid?' 'Oh I don't see a Paan Stall!' We have not only continued with our traditional dishes, but have also included the dishes prevalent at our new place of living. We have added Punjabi Dishes, South Indian Dishes, Gujarathi Dishes and so on to our menu. At many places, it becomes difficult to count the number of stalls.

We are incurring tremendous amount of wasteful expenditure on our marriages. In many cases, the 'Receptions', an unknown thing in the Valley, are arranged in five star hotels. I appeal to my brethren to perform the marriage ceremony in a simple and true religious manner. We have to start from our homes, before we ask others to implement it. The youth can take lead in this regard. I request them to come forward and opt for simple and 'no dowry' marriages. We have seen some simple and voluntary marriages in the early period of our migration. But with the passage of time, this all has faded away.

One more burning problem we are presently facing, is the marriage outside our community. It may be good to some extent, but the final results may not be encouraging. This is with particular reference to our girls. In any community, it is the woman who carries the Sanskars forward. So their marriage outside the community is apt to cause a dent in the propagation of our rituals and cultural heritage. The point is however debatable.

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Spirituality & Religion

... Sushil & Sunita Vakil

Swami Gagangiriji Maharaj

Though the denizens of this world may follow myriad cultures and religions, the eternal master is only ONE, by whatever name we may call him. God is the supreme Guru, but we are not physically and spiritually attuned to seek God, wrapped as we are, in a thick shroud of the worldly vices. So God speaks through his chosen ones, his spiritual disciples who teach the seekers of God, ways of realising him and consequently leading a more fulfilling life. They show us the much needed guiding light for the attainment of our divine purpose.

Among the many followers of God, Mahayogi Gagangiriji Maharaj has a profound uniqueness in the way that he has transcended all those mighty realms of spirituality in such a short span of time. His illuminated inner being lending its ethereal light to the suffering multitudes of humanity. His message of spirituality and love has got universal appeal. He treats all persons as God's own creations and does not divide humanity on the basis of caste, creed and religion. All men are equal in his eyes.

Swami Gagangiriji is on a different plane than other yogis, in the sense that he gives more importance to the soul than the mortal body, that is anyway no more than an outer garb for the immortal treasure within. People who have the good fortune of listening to him, experience vibrations of divine pleasure and a serene peace within. Whoever has come in personal contact with the Mahayogi, has been touched by his overflowing love for mankind and his devotion to the service of his fellowmen. He does not hesitate in serving the lowliest of the lowly and the poorest of the poor. He is performing a divinely assigned job. His message is simple - strive to reach God through meditation and self-realisation and don't stop midway in the quest for truth.

Yogiraj Sri Gagangiri Maharaj, who is as revered and worshipped as Emperor Chalukya Pulakeshi, hails from Patankar family. His original personal name is Sripad and he hails from village Mandure in Patan district of South Maharashtra. At the age of 7, he left his home and was sent to a relatively well known place Battees-shirala. This cult has Math of Nathsampradaya, which has a wide following all over India and has about 1600 establishments.

Sri Gagangiri Maharaj as a youthful sanyasi, also moved about with mahants (senior sages) right up to the Himalayas. During pilgrimages, he learnt yoga and several occult and religious practices. He travelled far and wide, and finally he reached Badrika Ashram in Himachal Pradesh. This place has ice-clad mountains, embedded in which is a place known as Vyas Gumpah. Gagangiri Maharaj was extremely tired as a result of his peregrinations and decided to settle in a cave. When he was relaxing, a sage wearing saffron robes came there from the mountains. He sprinkled water from his Kamandalu, on the face of Gagangiri Maharaj. He also gave him some kind of green grass to eat which resembled coriander leaves. He said, "You will now attain the state of salvation and you shall be responsible for the welfare of humanity, and you shall go to South. Accordingly Maharaj moved from the Valley. He experienced a lot of difficulties and arrived at Rishikesh. Swamiji then decided to move all over India alone on foot and

accordingly his journey started. Attired in saffron robes of a sanyasi, he was revered by people.

In 1932, the Raja of Kolhapur had been to Dajipur jungle for hunting. Swamiji, who had accompanied him, stayed back in the jungle, where he lived from 1932 to 1940. He spent these years in meditation and deep reflection.

Swamiji did penance at a number of places. During monsoon, he stayed in the cave at Garbhagiri, Gagangiri. He did penance in a pond near the river at Sangashi, Vazar, Vesraf etc. Later he went to Vidyadurg in the Konkan area, from where he reached Bombay by steamer. During 1945 to 1950, he stayed in Dadi Hirji Parsi graveyards near the temple of Maruti at Shidi near Walkeshwar. Similarly, he did penance in the barren, rocky beach at Breach Candy, Mahalaxmi, Ban Ganga etc. During this period, several rulers and princes such as Sayajirao Gaikwad, Madhavrao Shinde, Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj, Rajaram Maharaj (Kolhapur), Bavdekar Sarkar and Bhausahab Pant Amatya, Maharani Tarabi (Sayajirao Gaikwad's daughter) and a number of ruling families of Kolhapur came for his blessings.

Sri Maharaj built small shelters for himself in the caves of trees as his dwelling place. Usually, he would select a tree with abundant supply of fruit and vegetables. In order to protect himself from rains, he would devise some kind of clothes made from the bark of trees, such as Kumbha, Apte & Palas. As more and more people benefitted by his meditation, more and more people starting worshipping him and respecting him and his reputation spread all around. Ministers like Yeshvantrao Chavan, Balasaheb Desai, Rajaram Babu Patil, Kapse and several respected officers used to worship him.

In spite of all the preoccupations in respect of the society, Swamiji continued his penance for over 60 years, uninterrupted. Even in old age, he continued meditation while breathing, submerged in water in sunshine for the whole day. His lifestyle can be described in words as *Aesha Ekantwasi Yogiraja: Sadhali Jeevankal!* Living alone, sleeping on the banks of rivers, listening to the flowing of the river water, drying the entire body by solar radiation, sleeping on rock, meditating continuously staying absolutely still under water, keeping mind completely at rest, keeping all the physical desires under control and having only clean, hygienic pious wholesome pure and acceptable food. All this is the life of the perfect yogi. When you attain such a state of mind and body (which is called the 17th state) all the secretions that spring from mouth flow backwards emitting nectar. Hence a yogi does not need to have any food. Living in jungles, mountains, river banks provide enough loneliness so that a yogi achieves 'Siddha' state. This helps him to take care of the misdeeds and sins of the people around him. When life of Paramatma and Brahma become one, a yogi lives very happily and life for him is 'Anandvan' (Park of Happiness). Finally he attains salvation. Even people who have committed lot of sins are benefitted when they come in contact with such a person of divine gifts. He is the embodiment of knowledge and wisdom.

Ashish Pyaremohan Wazir - An ardent disciple of Swamiji:

Ashish is a dedicated and ardent disciple of Swami gagangiriji Maharaj. He hails from a KP family of Mumbai. Ashish, after completing his education in 1983, decided to serve Gagangiriji Maharaj and in this spiritual pursuit, he is serving day and night since then. In a conversation with Susil Vakil and Sunita Vakil, few months back at the Khapoli

Ashram, Ashish confided that it is a great blessing in disguise to be with a saint like Gagangiriji Maharaj. He further said, "One may get the darshan of Maharaj or one may be able to discuss one's problems with him, but to be with him while he is meditating, is of prime importance." Gagangiri Maharaj explains the details of yoga to Ashish, who notes the Maharaja's words in detail. Sometimes the words carry a deeper meaning than the sayings of learned men and have a lot of creativity in them. Only people who have a divine wisdom can understand the words, phrases and teachings of Gagangiri Maharaj and can fill in the blanks in his phrases. Ashish further adds that Gagangiri Maharaj pours out knowledge as though he is the Ganges of knowledge, which continuously flows and spreads fresh and new knowledge.

Ashish shares his personal experience with every body as to how he came in contact with Swami Gagangiriji Maharaj and experienced a 'Kayakalp'. "At that point of life, I was drifting like a rutherless boat in the sea of life. Though I did believe in supremacy of God, I could not find a guru who could lead me to my goal. I had chance encounters with many gurus at different stages, but none could quench my thirst for true knowledge and nobody touched the inner cords of my soul. I desperately prayed to God to show me the way and Swamiji came to me, touching my soul and transforming me completely. I changed in many ways and was able to let go the 'I' in my vocabulary. Thus began my long spiritual journey of 'Atmabodh' or self-realisation with the help of great benefactor Shri Shri Gagangiriji Maharaj."

Ashish being the youngest disciple of Mahayogi Gagangiriji Maharaj, has composed and recorded all the words and phrases he shared with him during his meditation at Gaganpad, Ambolgad, Dajipur, Vesraf, Himalayas and other places. Ashish has presented the discourses and every word of Maharaj ji in a number of books authored by him. The books give an insight into the spiritual journey of the great Yogi and his divine knowledge.

**Courtesy: Kashur Gazette, New Delhi.*

March 15-21, 2003.

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Tribute to Shantaji Kapoor

Ah Didi !!

... M.K.Raina

My frame is deep frozen
A long tongue protruding out in distress
My eyes lost into the vacuum
And paralysed.

My heart is sinking
I have no questions to ask
No sermons to deliver
My words are failing me.

I remember when I met you first
You caught me by my hand
I sought your introduction
You said "I am Shanta, but call me Didi".

And I concluded
I had someone to support me
Show me the way in a world strange
Lead me and give me love.

You called me 'Bhajan'
From the core of your heart
Showered upon me extreme affection
But, departed so soon, untimely ...

True ... Whoever is born, is to die
We are only spectators
Mute witness to the happenings around
Moving statues and powerless.

We will wait for a while
And revert back to our 'Karma'
Look out for the livelihood
And live our lives till we meet our own end.

But that again...
Will not be the end of the world
There will be no blackouts
World will move on, as it always did

And that is the life ...

Remembering you with grief
M.K.Raina

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Poetry

वीर गाथाएँ

– श्यामा मुन्शी, देवनार

कहां वह तेरा भोलापन
कहां वह तेरी सच्चरिता
कहां वह तेरी मानवता
कहां वह तेरी कर्मणयता।
ज़रा बता दो, और बता दो
कहां गई और कहां रहेगी, वह तेरी वीर गाथाएँ।।

जो मरने पर भी अमर थी
जो जरित हो के भी अजर थी
जो यौवन की मधु मुस्कान से
सदा खेलती रहती थी।
हां बता दो और बता दो
कहां गई और कहां रहेगी, वह तेरी वीर गाथाएँ।।

यौवन के भारी उपवन में
यौवन के झलकते फूलों से
यौवन के मद हाथी से
यौवन की जंजीरों से।
टकर टकर के बुद्धि रख के
कहां गई और कहां रहेगी, वह तेरी वीर गाथाएँ।।

आने दो आने दो
इन कांटों को इन कष्टों को
इन कठिनाइयों को, इन बाधाओं को।
सहकर, जुटकर, सम्हलकर
भगा लो और भगाकर बोलो

कहां गई और कहां रहेगी, वह तेरी वीर गाथाएँ।

माताओं बहनों भाइयों के
सुप्त शरीर जगाने हैं
बुझे हुए असंख्य द्वीप
पुनः हम को जलाने हैं।
जल जल के परवाने जागेंगे
यह क्रांति हम को मचानी है
आओ पुनः प्रयास करते हुए बोलो
कहां गई और कहां रहेगी, वह तेरी वीर गाथाएँ।

पनुन पान स्वरन छुस

... म.क.रैना, वसई

पीति पीति गरुं बुं बरन
पनुन पान स्वरन छुस।
पानसुंय बुं म्वखतुं जरन, पनुन पान स्वरन छुस।।

लुख छि करन दान दर्म
कर्म करन मॉर्यमँद्य।
बुं च्वदा'ह त्रँकिस खार करन, तमी तारुं तरन छुस।।
पानसुंय बुं म्वखतुं जरन, पनुन पान स्वरन छुस।।।

पितुर दँहम काँश करन
माग दरन पूरि पूर।
ज्यादुं ख्यो'न म्य बारि पे'यम, ते'ली फाकुं करन छुस।।
पानसुंय बुं म्वखतुं जरन, पनुन पान स्वरन छुस।।।

डाय गंटुं पूज करिथ
मालुं जपन लालुं म्योन।
बुं कालुं बुथिस ट्यो'का करिथ, अपुज सांग करन छुस।।
पानसुंय बुं म्वखतुं जरन, पनुन पान स्वरन छुस।।।

दपन छँहम अँनिस कँलिस
मदद करुन रवा छु।
पो'ज, मगर करस किथुं, पोंडुं दादि मरन छुस।।
पानसुंय बुं म्वखतुं जरन, पनुन पान स्वरन छुस।।।

पनुन पुरुद नाद लायि
म्य नो बायि महल छम।
हकस, पँजिस फेश दिनस, पनुन वक्त बरन छुस।।

पानसुँय बुँ म्वखतुँ जरन, पनुन पान स्वरन छुस।।।

मॅरिथ गो'छुख तार लगुन

लूख अवय परन वीद।

म्य छुम टोठ ये'त्युक तार, तम्युक सबक परन छुस।।

पानसुँय बुँ म्वखतुँ जरन, पनुन पान स्वरन छुस।।।

निकस छुम अमार मॅतिस

ब्वछि हॅतिस ख्याविहे।

सुय म्य कर्यम खार पॅतिस, सूंच्य् सूंच्य् हरन छुस।।

पानसुँय बुँ म्वखतुँ जरन, पनुन पान स्वरन छुस।।।

ज़रा सोचिये

... प्रताब बूटानी

गुजरात गुजरात सभी कहें
कहे न कोई कश्मीर।
गुज में खून खराबा हुआ चंद दिन
कश में तो हो रहा है हर दिन।।

गुज में चले तीर, भाले, त्रिशूल
रहा न लों का कोई रूल।
रहा न ऐसा घर मातम जहां न हो
जहां गम और डर के बादल न हो।।

गुज में मृतकों पर शोक हुआ
हमदर्दी की लहर दिल को छूती रहीं।
जुलूस, भाषण, सभायें होती रहीं
अदालत, एलेक्शन कॅमीशन ने
नाराज़गी दिखायी।।

माना गुजरात में आहें उठी हज़ार
पर कश्मीर में तो उठ रही हैं बेशुमार।
गुज में अब शांति है, राहत है
पर कश में हमले
गोलियां दिन रात चल रही हैं।।

कश्मीर सालों से जूझ रहा
इन विदेशी आतंकवादियों से।
कैसे जी रहे हैं पूछो
उन बेवाओं और यतीमों से।।

धंधा, रोज़ी नौकडी गयी
गयी जिंद और जान।
अपना प्रांत होते भी
बने बेगाने हैरान।।

मौत का साया मंडराता है
चारों पहर, चारों तरफ से।
हम कब मुक्त होंगे
इस 'प्रोक्सी वॉर' से।।

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Children's Page

... Compiled by 'Kostur'

'Increase your Knowledge' Series:

Shark Senses

Over the course of hundreds of millions of years, sharks have evolved a remarkable array of prey-detection systems, probably the most diverse of any predator. A shark can home in on its prey from more than 2 kms. away. This is because its ears are tuned in to low-frequency vibrations, such as those produced by an injured fish, which can travel great distances.

At a distance of 0.5 Kms., a shark can smell blood or body fluids in the water and follow the trail back towards its source. It can detect one part blood in 100 million parts water.

At 100 mtrs. from its prey, the shark's lateral line - a row of fluid filled sensory canals running along either side of its head and body - picks up changes of pressure in the water produced by the prey as it moves or struggles. From about 25 mtrs., depending upon the clarity of the water, a shark can see its prey, and some sharks see in colour, discriminating between blue, blue-green and yellow. Shark eyes are ten times more sensitive to dim light than those of humans. This is due to a layer of reflective plates behind the retina that bounces light back onto the light-sensitive cells, enabling the shark to make use of every photon of available. When a shark needs to rise rapidly from the murky depths to attack prey swimming in the brightly lit surface water, it avoids being blinded by covering up the reflective plates. Cells filled with the dark pigment melanin quickly move into channels on the reflective plates, preventing them from reflecting light. In dim light the cells migrate away.

When some species of shark attack, they protect their eyes with a third eyelid known as a nictitating membrane, or by rolling them back into protective sockets in the head. At this point, a shark is swimming blind and it brings into play yet another remarkable sensory system. Jelly-filled pits in the shark's nose contain cells that are sensitive to electricity. They are so sensitive that they can detect a change of a hundred-millionth of a volt per centimeter. This means that a shark can pick up the minute electrical currents produced by a fish's beating heart or the contraction of muscles in its tail.

The hammerhead shark, with its curious T-shaped head, is a prime exponent of this method of detection. It swings its head from side to side over the sea bed, like a person with a metal detector, searching for tiny electrical currents. In this way it can locate the position of flatfishes, skates and rays buried under the sea.

• • • • •

लल वारव

तल छुय ज्युस तय प्यठ छुव नचान
वन तुँ मालि मन क्यथ पचान छुय ।
सोरुय सौँबरिथ येत्य् छुय म्वचान
वन तुँ मालि अन क्यथ रोचान छुय ॥



दमन बरिस्त दितो दम
तिथय यिथ दमन खार ।
शॅरतुँरस खन गछी हॉसिल
वुनि छय सुल तुँ छांडुन यार ॥



जरा हंसिये

रतन ने ईट भट्टे वाले से ईट का भाव पूछा। जवाब मिला, 'जितनी ज़्यादा खरीदोगे, उतनी ही सस्ती पड़ेंगी।'

'फिर तो तब तक ट्रक में लादते जाओ, जब तक कीमत शून्य हो जाए।'

.....

Project ZAAN

Know Your Language

Peculiar Kashmiri Words & Phrases - 4

चिर-ग्युश chirgyúsh
(*pleasure caused by vocal exercise*)

चरि लछुँ.ज tsari lathûj
(*a kind of grass used in making brooms; its seeds are used as medicine*)

चवप्यंदुल tsôpêndúl
(*seized by hands and feet or bound by ropes*)

चरचुन tsartsún
(*to watch, investigate*)

डाये'य पोष तुलुँ dàyéy pòsh túlû
(*very delicate, as if weighing two and a half flowers*)

डुबुँ-डास dúbû-dàs
(*utter destruction*)

तपोल्यु tapäl
(*plague, general outbreak of cholera or the like*)

तबाशीर tabàshir
(*sugar of the bamboo*)

थर-नानुख thar-nànúkh
(*the inscriptions on a coin, 'nànúkh' being the side inscribed with official seal or emblem and 'thar', the back of the coin*)

दारि दजि पॉथुँर dàri dají pãthûr
(*doll like conduct of a bride and bridegroom ~ a play to solemnise marriage of dolls*)

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Noble Thoughts

*English translation of a benediction in Sanskrit by Jagadguru Sankaracharya of
Sri Kamakothi Pitham*

Clarity with Sweet Words,
Knowledge with Humility,
Courage with Patience,
Wealth with renunciation,
Worthy to Earn
Education - Economics - Strength,
Fame - Merit,
Cultivate Friendship which will Conquer all Hearts,
Look upon others as Thyself,
Renounce War, forswear Competition,
Give up Aggression on others
which is wrong,
Wide mother Earth, our Mother is here
ready to give us all our Desires,
We have the Lord, our Father
Compassionate to all,
Ye Peoples of the World!
Restrain Yourself, Give, be Kind,
May all people be
Happy and Prosperous.

-Translation by M.L.Mattoo

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Report & Biradhari News

REPORT

Nadimarg Massacre - Protest by KPs.

Members of the KP biradari from Mumbai & Navi Mumbai held a demonstration in Kopar Khairna on 30th March 2003, to protest against the brutal killing of 24 Kashmiri Pandits at Nadimarg in Kashmir. Demonstration was held under the banner of Kashmiri Pandits Association and the Uttar Bharati Hindu Mahasangh.

Terming Pakistan as the 'Mother of Terrorism', the demonstrators requested the international biradari to declare Pakistan a Terrorist State. They also deplored the Media for underreporting/misreporting the facts with regard to genocide of Kashmiri Pandits.

News from AIKS

[AIKS is the apex body of 42 affiliate organisations of Kashmiri displaced persons in India and abroad.]

A delegation of KP Front Organisations, led by Shri M.K.Kaw, President AIKS, called on Shri L.K.Advani, Dy. PM and Home Minister of India on 29th March 2003 in his office at North Block, New Delhi. The delegation, among other things, conveyed its strong feelings of condemnation on the dastardly massacre of 24 KPs in Nadimarg, and pleaded for a high level probe into the security failure, to pin point the weakness in the system. It was also emphasised that the return of KPs to the Valley should not be decided unilaterally without consulting them. A written Memorandum was also submitted to the Dy. PM.

AIKS Agenda

Shri M.K.Kaw, after having taken over as President of the All India Kashmiri Samaj, New Delhi, has set the following agenda for next three years:

- i) Build up the office and infrastructure of AIKS.
- ii) Create a democratic system of functioning through committees and panels.
- iii) Take all decisions by consensus.
- iv) Institute Constitutional reforms.
- v) Build a sound financial base.
- vi) Implement a programme for the amelioration of the condition of Kashmiri Pandits in general and those in distress in particular.
- vii) Formulate and implement a programme for the development of the community and social reforms, especially in the context of issues relating to women and children.
- viii) Formulate a realistic National Policy on Kashmir and create a political consensus for its adoption and implementation.
- ix) Convert AIKS into a single moderate, mainstream voice of the Kashmiri Pandits and try to forge a consensus between the persons and the parties holding different shades of opinion.
- x) Delegate functions and powers to Zones and Unit levels so as to ensure better monitoring and coordination among the associates and other units.

AIKS Press-Release

According to a Press Release, issued by M.L.Kaul, General secretary of AIKS, an eight member delegation of AIKS led by Sh. M.K.Kaw met Sh. N.N.Vohra, Government of India's interlocutor on Kashmir, on 30th May 2003, and placed before him the view point of the KP's migrant community regarding the issues concerning the dialogue with various political groups in Jammu & Kashmir. The delegation discussed the issue of autonomy and host of other problems connected with bringing peace and stability in Jammu & Kashmir. The delegation emphasised that government of India should accept no solution which undermines territorial integrity of the country, nor should it involve surrender of any part of the territory to Pakistan. It should not also jeopardise the secular and democratic fabric of the country.

The delegation dwelt on the issue of return of Kashmiri Pandits and discussed the confidence-building measures which could help in the rehabilitation of those forcibly ousted from the state, and reverse the process of ethnic cleansing started by the Islamic fundamentalist forces operating in the state.

Earlier the AIKS delegation met Dr. Manmohan Singh, Leader of the congress party in Rajya Sabha and placed before him the problems facing the migrant community temporarily living in camps and other places in the country. The delegation presented him a memoranda containing urgent problems facing Kashmiri Pandits in addition to those relating to their return to Kashmir. Dr Manmohan Singh's response to the issues raised by the delegation was positive and encouraging. He extended his party's assurance to the delegation that issues which could be tackled by Jammu and Kashmir government, would he discussed with the Chief Minister and ways and means found to satisfactorily resolve them. As regards problems whose solution was within the competence of the central government, the Congress party would endeavor to bring these to the notice of concerned central Ministers and seek their redressal.

AIKS Vice Presidents

The President AIKS, New Delhi, vide a Circular dated 3rd June 2003, has nominated the following as Vice Presidents. Their jurisdictions and areas of work are shown in brackets:

- 1) Sh. M.L. Mattoo, KPA, Mumbai. [Vice President, Western Zone]
- 2) Sqn. Ldr. B.L.Sadhu, Kashmiri Bhawan, Chandigarh [Vice President, Northern Zone]
- 3) Shri Sunil Shakhder, Pamposh Encl, New Delhi [Vice President, New Delhi]
- 4) Pt. T.N. Khosa, Kashyap Niwas, Amphalla, Jammu Tawi [Vice President, J&K]
- 5) Pt. L.N. Kaul, Kashmir Bhawan, Kolkata [Vice President, East Zone]
- 6) Dr. Vimal Razdan, K.S, Jodhpur [Vice President].
- 7) Pt. D.N. Kaul, Mahanagar, Lucknow [Vice President, Central Zone]

Following duties have been assigned to them:

- i) To tour extensively in the area to monitor and coordinate the AIKS action programme.
- ii) To reactivate the dormant AIKS units in the zone. iii) To bring the unrepresented K.P. Groups in the region into AIKS mainstream. iv) To raise resources through donations, advertisements or organising programmes for fund raising for AIKS. v) To publicise programmes and policies drawn up by AIKS through group discussions and send feed

back to AIKS. vi) To interact with moderate communities in the zone and other minority leaders to seek support for our cause.

AIKS circular 5(1) 2000 Dt: 2-06-2003

Subject Registration of Kashmiri Migrants:

This has reference to letter no KSS101 dated 22 May 2003 from President KSS Chandigarh addressed to Sh. Ravi Thusoo, Relief Commissioner J&K. This subject has been attracting AIKS attention since long and we have been pursuing the matter with central Government. Kashmiri Samiti and other state affiliates have also been making effort for registration of migrants at their ends. On the recommendation of Delhi State Government and vigorously pursued thereafter by Kashmiri Samiti Delhi, the Government of India has relented and recently decided to open registration of migrants who for various reasons were left out after it was closed in 1992. Kashmiri Samiti is coordinating the re-registration, who will very soon get in touch with you on the matter and send you copy of the Government circular and the forms for your guidance and follow-up.— General Secretary AIKS.

News from Bangalore

Kashmiri Visthapit Seva Samiti, Bangalore, in an emergency meeting held on 24th March 2003, deeply condemned the barbaric attack on Kashmiri Pandits at Nadimarg. The Samiti also questioned the secular credentials of successive governments of J&K State including the present government headed by Mufti Mohd. Syed. A two-minute silence was also observed in the memory of those killed brutally at Nadimarg.

On 25th March, 2003, a delegation of the Samiti led by Mr. Opendar K. Bali, Secretary, submitted a Memorandum to Shri T.N.Chaturvedi, Hon'ble Governor of Karnataka at Raj Bhawan.

Over 200 Kashmiri Pandits including women and children residing in Bangalore, Mysore and Tumkur held a demonstration in front of Mahatma Gandhi Statue on M.G.Road in Bangalore, protesting against the brutal killings. The protest was jointly organised by Kashmiri Hindu Samiti and Kashmiri Hindu Cultural Welfare Trust, Bangalore.

News from Chandigarh

According to a Press Release issued by the Kashmiri Sahayak Sabha, Chandigarh, a general body meeting of the Sabha was held at the Bhawan on 31st May, 200. Following office bearers were re-elected for a further period of one year:

Sqd Ldr. B.L.Sadhu	President
Smt Phoola Raina	Vice President
Sh. Anil Mattao	General secretary
Sh. M.L.Wattal	Finance Secretary
Sh. Surinder Kaul	Joint Secretary
Ms. Arti Kaul	Social Secretary

Members: Sh. A.K.Nehru, Sh. Ashok Tiku, Dr. Rakesh Dhar, Sh. Sanjay Tiku, Sh. Sanjeev Kaul,
Sh. Manoj Handoo & Sh. Ajay Pandita.

Sh. M.L.Ambardar and Sh. C.L.Pandita, both Trustees were also re-elected.

MUMBAI BIRADARI NEWS:

Mahanirvan Anniversary of Bhagwan Sri Gopinathji Maharaj:

The 35th Mahanirvan Anniversary of Bhagwan Sri Gopinathji Maharaj was celebrated at Narmadheshwar Mandir, Trombay on 2nd June 2003. A Hawan was performed with full sanctity followed by a community Prasad. Fotedar family played a major role in the celebrations.

Yegneopavit

Yegneopavit ceremony of **Dheeraj** (S/o Smt. Sarla and Shri S.K.Razdan of Mayant Apartments, I.C.Colony, Borivali) was performed at Mumbai on 7th May, 2003.

? Nuptials

Dheeraj (S/o Smt. Sarla & Shri S.K.Razdan of Mayank Apartments, I.C.Colony, Borivali) was married to **Sangeeta** (D/o Smt. & Shri Sanatan Das of Brahmapur, Orissa) on 12 May 2003 at Bhubaneshwar. Wedding Reception-cum-Dinner, to bless the couple, was also held at MIG Cricket Club, Kalanagar, Bandra on 17th May 2003.

Change of Address:

(LM-118)

Raina Kapil

N-475, Tarapore Towers, Oshiwara, Andheri (W), Mumbai 400 053. Tel: 26341551.

(LM-197)

Mongha Triloki Nath

(LM-187)

Mongha Raj N.

0:1, F-11, Sagar, Sector 29, Vashi,
Navi Mumbai 400 703. Tel: 27668973.

(LM-127)

Razdan Ramesh

303, Mittal Ocean View, B-Wing, Juhu Tara Road (Royal Hotel Bus Stop), Santacruz (W), Mumbai 400 049. Tel: 26609967.

Correction

In the Oct-Dec 2002 issue of Milchar, the residential address of Shri Ashok Moza (LM-565) has inadvertently been shown wrong. His correct address is: C-315, Jyoti C.H.Society, Shahad (W), Kalyan, Dist. Thane 421 103. Tel: 0251-2300418. Error is regretted.

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Letters

? The Milchar is really becoming very valuable publication of Kashmiri Pandits. It is always a pleasure to go through its contents. There is a need that all our publications in India and abroad are in close touch with each other and exchange the information about their Sabhas / Samitis / Associations. I always look forward to this informative and meaningful publication. Bangalore unit also, I am given to understand, have started a Monthly. I hope the Association at Mumbai has gone through the formalities for finalizing the deal for having a plot in Navi Mumbai. I wish it all success.

Dr. B. K. Moza, Kolkata

? Please let me compliment KPA through the columns of 'Milchar' at the excellent manner in which the annual Hawan was performed at Vashi this year. It being the first time such a large gathering of Kashmiri Pandits got together in a new and far off location, augers well for the future of this esteemed organisation and its office bearers. The success of this Hawan function at Vashi is a pointer to the fact that the annual Hawan should be held alternately in Eastern/Western suburbs. That will give opportunity to more people to participate, which is the essence of the Association.

P. M. Wazir, Vashi

? Sab Desh Vasiyon Ko Mohan Lal Bradoo Ka Namaskar! I am highly grateful to the entire Kashmiri Pandit community of Mumbai, all the past and present members of the Association and also the Hon'ble President of the Association, for honouring me with the Life-time Contribution Award, which has given me and my family immense joy and happiness. It has also enhanced my respect and dignity. I sincerely thank you all from the bottom of heart.

Mohan Lal Bradoo

? महोदयजी! मैं इस पत्र द्वारा आपका आभार प्रगट करता हूं कि कुछ माह पूर्व मेरी दुर्घटना से संबंधित आर्थिक सहायता हेतु वाचक गणों से याचना की गयी थी। जिसके फलस्वरूप कई दानियों ने मुझे सहायता देकर कृतार्थ किया है। अतः आप से नम्र निवेदन है कि आगामी संस्करण में उपरोक्त विषय के संदर्भ में आभार प्रगट करें। धन्यवाद।

राजेश कुमार

Ah Shanta Kapoor!

? Really it is shocking news that Smt. Shanta ji is now no more with us. A selfless lady who has always given selfless service to our community in Mumbai. She will be always remembered for her selfless service in our Biradari. May Lord Shiva give peace to the departed soul and give strength to her family to bear this irreparable loss.

Tej Pandit

? We are all grieved to learn about the sad demise of Shanti ji. Please convey our heartfelt condolences to her family. May her soul rest in peace.

M. L. Sazawal

? It was sad to learn about the demise of Shantajee Kapoor. Her urge for social work and her sweet and smiling face should be source of inspiration for all of us. May God give her peace in her heavenly abode.

Pran Nath Miya and family

? Kashmiri Pandit Biradari, Hyderabad deeply mourns the sudden and untimely death of Smt. Shanta Kapoor, Vice President, Kashmiri Pandits' Association, Mumbai. I, on my behalf and on behalf of Kashmiri Pandit Biradari, Hyderabad express our condolences to the bereaved family and pray to Almighty that her soul rest in peace.

Dr. Smeer Durani

? Our condolence on untimely demise of Smt. Shantaji Kapoor. May her sole rest in heavens.

Mrs. and Mr. A.K.Razdan

? How sad! Great souls leave deep impressions. May her soul rest in peace.

Urmila Zutshi

? I am saddened to know this. May Almighty give peace to her soul.

Vinod K. Miya

? We are dumbfound to learn about sudden and untimely departure of our own 'Shanta ji'. We pray to almighty for peace to this noble dedicated soul. Shanta Ji's absence will be felt by our 'Biradari' for a long time. As, at every step and occasion, her direct or indirect presence and role was not only felt but visible. Our heart felt condolences go to the Kapoor Family in particular and in general to the entire KP family of Mumbai, whom she helped and so dearly loved. May God give strength to us to bear this irreparable loss. Huge vacuum has been created in KPA BOT, which the President KPA might find difficult to fill. Om Shaanti !!!

Family of Monghas, Vashi

? Please accept our condolences on the passing away of swargavasini Shantaji Kapoor. Aum, Shantih, Shantih, Shantih.

Supriya and Girdhari Lal Bhan, UK

? I have come to know with shock and pain about the sudden demise of Ms. Shantiji Kapoor. I have known her through the pages of the prestigious MILCHAR. Her contributions to Kashmiri Pandit community, particularly the Mumbai Biradari have been immense. It is sad and painful that our community is deprived of such a distinguished lady whose sincere contributions to KPA, Mumbai and Lalla-Ded Trust, will be ever remembered. I convey sympathies and condolences on my behalf and on behalf of the Kashmiri Pandit Biradari of Kolkata. Grateful for conveying the same to the bereaved family.

Dr. B. K. Moza

? Very sad to hear about her. Our heart felt condolences to her family

M. K. Kachroo

? We are sad to know about the sad demise of Smt. Shanta Jee. Although I have not known her personally, but understandably she has contributed lot to Kashmiri Pandits' Association, Mumbai. Please convey our heartfelt sympathies to the family members of Smt Shanta Jee. May God grant peace to departed soul.

M. K. Raina, Pune

Please convey my sincere and heartfelt condolences to both Rakesh and Rajesh at the sad demise of their beloved mother dear Shantaji. As an ex-Chairman of Lalla-Ded Trust, I shall always remain indebted to Shantaji, who was the one 'with a very strong Backbone'. I shall always cherish the memory of her support in whatever little Lalla-Ded Trust did achieve while I was the Chairman. May her Soul attain eternal peace in the Heavenly abode.

Avtar K. Misri

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Project ZAAAN

Information Digest Vol. 4

Information Digest Volume 4 has been released. Copies can be had from Kashmiri Pandits' Association, Kashyap Bhawan, Plot No. 16, Bhawani Nagar, Marol Maroshi Road, Andheri (E), Mumbai 400 059, and Lalla-Ded Educational and Welfare Trust, Ground Floor, Pushp Vihar, Shastri Nagar, Vasai Road (W), Dist. Thane 401 202.

Price per copy: Rs. 10.00.

Please Remember

Contents of this Volume will be included in the Questionnaire for **Zaan Competitive Events** to be held on **19th October 2003**.

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