

Vitasta Annual Number

The Publication of Kashmir Sabha, Calcutta
"Cultural Heritage of India - Kashmiri Pandit Contribution"

KASHMIR BHAWAN, CALCUTTA

CK-35 (NEAR CK MARKET)
KARUNAMOYEE, SALT LAKE
CALCUTTA-700 091
PHONE: 358 3932

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Vitasta Annual Number

Vol. XXXIII (1999-2000)

*Kashyap Bandhu Centenary Number –
"Kashmiri Pandit Reformation and Global Diaspora".*

Editor-in-Chief: **Dr. B. K. Moza**
Editor : (English Section) : **Shri Rajiv Sapru**
Editor : (Hindi/Kashmiri Section) : **Smt. Niva Kaul**

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1 Preface

It is a privilege and pleasure to bring out this 33rd Annual Number, 1999-2000, of the VITASTA, dedicated to the memory of Pandit Kashyap Bandhu to mark his birth centenary. His birthday takes place, as per his family sources, on Chaitra Krishnapaksh, Navmi, which coincided this year with the 29th March, 2000; his 100th birth anniversary having been, accordingly, on 11th March 1999.

Pandit Kasliyap Bandhu has been one of the greatest leaders Kashmiri Pandit community has produced in Kashmir. The pages of this KASHYAP BANDHU CENTENARY NUMBER, will reveal his rare contributions, as an outstanding journalist, social reformer and political leader of Kashmir, which deserve to be recorded in the history of Kashmir and Kashmiri Pandits in golden letters. Since Social Reform movement in Kashmir was started by him, it was considered necessary to have a theme for this publication related to Kashmiri Pandit Reformation - a subject which was very dear to Bandhuji and for which he had thought till the last day, of his life. For the last six hundred years Kashmiri Pandit community has been passing, periodically, through great turmoils causing considerably their death, destruction, conversions and diaspora from their motherland. During the last decade things have become worse and traumatic with Kashmiri Pandits, resulting in their ethnic cleansing from Kashmir. Having suffered various diaspora, this community has got scattered almost through the length and breadth of India and also abroad. With a view to making this Number Purposeful for Kashmiri Pandits scattered globally, it was considered desirable to bring out a KASHYAP BANDHU NUMBER which would discuss the Reformation movement as started by him in Kashmir relevant to all the members of this community scattered globally. The purpose also being to present some models of movements and thought processes as were experienced by them at different global locations to preserve their identity and uphold the spirit of excellence. Having been deprived of their mother land, there is a genuine concern in the community whether the Kashmiri culture and tradition will at all survive. Therefore it was all the more reasonable and necessary to invite articles giving the models of cultural trends and practices followed by those who migrated from Kashmir centuries back and lived in far flung locations, quite isolated from Kashmir. Such studies would enable us to draw lessons and give some optimism and hope as regards our identity preservation. This, under present conditions, has otherwise raised a question mark and therefore, requires thoughtful and well conceived efforts and also direction for being safeguarded, As such, whilst offering our heartfelt homage to Kashyap Bandhu Ji, this publication is brought out with a befitting theme, "Kashmiri Pandit Reformation and Global Diaspora" after a considerable thought.

Having decided on this theme for this proposed publication, all efforts were made to search for necessary information about Pt. Kashyap Bandhu's life and achievements, about Kashmiri Pandits who have settled in various parts of India and those who are presently settled abroad. Though initially there was scanty response to our requests for desired information but with persistent efforts, it was possible to source and receive a treasure of information particularly related to Pt. Kashyap Bandhu and we have considered it necessary to include most of this information even at the risk of some repetition and being "me too" or even contradictory. With the sudden exodus from Kashmir most of the records have become unaccessible or destroyed and there is a great need for collecting and documenting all available information about our past and about the persons who have been instrumental for the preservation of our identity and excellence. Kashmir Sabha Calcutta has made a beginning in this connection by documenting whatever information became available about the tallest amongst our community leaders in Kashmir, coincidentally on the occasion of his birth centenary. This requires to be continued and also followed up by the other Kashmiri Pandit organizations in other places. We have approached a broad spectrum of opinion makers, political analysts, journalists, academicians and leaders of our community having different political views and have searched most of the relevant details about Bandhu ji as available in such repositories of records as National Library and Asiatic Society of Calcutta etc. We have tried to get different and diverse opinion from different

sources so as to give a complete picture as transparently as possible. In this connection it is necessary to mention that the responsibility for the exactness of the information lies with the authors only.

Pt. Kashyap Bandhu had a special admiration for Kashmir Sabha, Calcutta and records reveal that his last communication from his death bed some hours before his demise was to give a message to Calcutta Sabha, which now stands memorable as his last letter, communicated by him. It was related to our Vitasta Annual 1985 - the Martand Number - which was consecrated to his memory at that time. We have considered it necessary to reproduce from this Number this memorable letter also some articles related to "Martand" with which he was emotionally connected as its first editor.

Whilst we had a very good response from our brethren in various locations in India who have migrated from Kashmir centuries back as a result of earlier diaspora, we feel concerned regretfully that despite our best efforts the response from abroad was not up to our expectations. However, we are thankful to Dr. Lalit Wanchoo, President KOA, USA for his valuable contribution drawing attention of our community members to changing scenario of information technology and communication and how they are making use of this for preserving our identity abroad. We are thankful to former President of KOA, England, Dr. G.L. Bhan for giving his views related to the challenges of present diaspora. It is gratifying and heartening that we had a great response from our students, some of them still brats in schools abroad, who sent us their contributions. It was surprising that many of them are expressing their feelings, nostalgia and reactions to contemporary happenings in verse which is in agreement with the assumption that poetry is in Kashmiri Pandit genes and no matter wherever diaspora has taken them they are revealing inclination, aptitude and excellence in poetry. We have taken pleasure in including whatever contributions we received from our children abroad.

It does not require to be emphasized that such publications involve a stupendous resource of efforts, ideas, time, specialised skills of professional nature and enormous finances. We confess we are not professional journalists and are constrained on account of inadequate infrastructure. As such we seek the indulgence of our readers for all the sins of omissions and commissions which, under such circumstances, are perhaps unavoidable.

We extend our heartfelt acknowledgements to the authors of papers presented in this publication, valuable cooperation provided at the preparatory stages by Dr. Rajiv Bhat, Mr. Vibavisu Kaul (son of Pt. Kashyap Bandhu) who gave us photographs and a file of *Desh* together with various diaries for our perusal and future use, Dr. R.K. Taimiri, Mr. T.N. Khosa (President Of Kashmiri Pandit Sabha, Jammu) Col Sahni and Prof. K.N. Pandita from Jammu and Dr. B.N. Sharga (Sr. Vice President, AIKS) of Lucknow. We are thankful to Kashmir Sabha, Calcutta for providing financial resource, to Jst. Conveners, Shri M.K. Ogra and Shri P.L. Sapru for organising finances, to Kashmir Sabha President, Shri U.Kaul, and its Executive Committee members for their encouragement and help in bringing out this publication. We are thankful to advertisers for their valuable support.

This publication is the outcome of team work carried out by our untiring editors, Shri Rajiv Sapru for English section without whose dedicated efforts this voluminous publication would not have seen, on time, the light of the day and Smt Niva Kaul, assisted by Smt Pratibha Moza for Devnagri section. We hope our readers will find this publication purposeful and up to the efforts that have gone in bringing it out. We will feel encouraged to receive the valuable comments.

Dr. B.K. Moza

April 2000
Calcutta

2 Editorial

It gives me both pride and pleasure to be associated with another issue of the Annual Vitasta.

KASHYAP BANDHU CENTENARY NUMBER

"KASHMIRI PANDIT REFORMATION AND GLOBAL DIASPORA".

Kashmiri Pandits over the centuries have been often at the receiving end of persecution and maltreatment at the hands of rulers and the powers that be. This situation has given rise to a diaspora which besides directly affecting the community through a change of location has also forced it to adopt and adapt itself to different living conditions not only in India but in different parts of the world as well.

Social reform is a continuous and ongoing process and no society has been able to keep itself sheltered from external forces of change. Throughout the world there are examples of societies facing constant influences on their behavioural patterns. When faced with these influences it is often a matter of time before societies have to make re-adjustments in order to keep pace with the world outside. The changes that result thereafter have impact on not only the social aspect but also economic and political behaviour. As such social reforms have wide ranging impacts on other facets of life, it is essential to make an assessment of social changes that may have been brought about as a result of reform movements. Pandit Kashyap Bandhu as is evident from the plethora of published material on him as well as his own writings, was a star in the firmament of the Kashmiri Pandit community. Besides being an exceptional journalist, he was a true people's leader - a leader who understood the pulse of the people, diagnosed their problems and offered simple yet effective means to their survival. It is however left to us to continue his line of social reform in our own way and in our own times. Social change is not the domain of one single entity and is neither a process which has an end.

Whilst putting together this volume of the Vitasta Annual Number, I have been overwhelmed by the enthusiastic response received to the request for sending in articles / published material on Kashyap Bandhu and relevant to our theme. Though it has not been possible to publish all the material received therein, owing to constraints of space, I wish to put on record our appreciation for the efforts put in by all the contributors of articles/published material on the relevant theme. For the purpose of comprehension, I have segregated the English portion of this Annual Number into six sections:

Life and thoughts of Kashyap Bandhu

Writings of Kashyap Bandhu

Tributes to Kashyap Bandhu

Kashmiri Pandit Movements

Kashmiri Pandit Diaspora in India

Kashmiri Pandit Overseas Diaspora

The first three sections give us an insight into the life, thoughts, writings and social reforms initiated by Pandit Kashyap Bandhu. The third section in particular contains tributes by various eminent personalities of the Kashmiri Pandit community to Kashyap Bandhu. Section IV highlights the general reform movement initiated by Kashmiri Pandits within and outside Kashmir together with two important movements in Kashmir - the Rishi movement and the Parameshwari movement. The fifth and sixth section deals with Kashmiri Pandit diaspora in India and abroad. A special mention here must be made of Sameer Munshi's four poems which deserve appreciation, as well as a prize winning essay titled "Civil disobedience in Thoreau and Gandhi" by Ashu Daftari. The tailpiece is an article titled 'Kashmir: The roots of our culture' by Dr.K. N.Pandita which is essential to attain an understanding of our origins.

I thank Dr. B. K. Moza, our Editor-in-Chief for once again entrusting me with the responsibility of editing this Annual Number and for being the prime mover behind this Issue. Dr. Moza has taken

great pains to collect and cull material relevant to this year's theme and develop the same. I also thank the contributors support year after year, to our printer Shri Sengupta who never fails and my family for giving me crucial support while at work on this issue.

Namaskar

Rajiv Sapru

April 2000

3 From the President

Udainath Kaul

What a pleasure and a privilege it is to present this very special issue of the Vitasta Annual. This Annual is in our small world an epoch making one, not only because the Annual is the first one of the Millennium, but essentially because this issue, after considerable mental and physical efforts of the Editors, projects successfully the theme of this Kashyap Bandhu Centenary Number viz "Kashmiri Pandit Reformation and GLOBAL DIASPORA".

The issues highlighted in this Annual couldn't be presented at a more appropriate time. The situation in Kashmir seems to be taking a new turn. There is a marked tilt of the world opinion, lead lately by America, Britain and even Japan, towards India's stand on Kashmir. The Huriyat, an umbrella organisation of dissidents and anti-India organisations have announced their coming to the negotiation table with the Centre without Pakistan's participation on which issue they had refused to talk previously on three occasions. This changed stand of the Huriyat leaders was revealed in Calcutta just before BJP formed the Govt. first time. These Huriyat leaders addressed some select gathering and Press in the Presidency College Hall in Calcutta where I was also present. As there was some delay in the arrival of their transport to take them to the airport. I was requested to drop them at the airport in my car which I happily did. On the way to the airport, I enquired of them if there was any hope in near future of the Kashmir problem being sorted out. Prof. Abdul Gani Lone, an acknowledged policy maker and spokesman of the Huriyat, after a very telling pause and after looking at his other three colleagues replied "yes there is hope only if BJP comes to power". What further transpired is beyond the scope of this write-up. But it does seem that we see the proverbial light at the end of the tunnel.

The massacre of Sikhs in Chattisinghpora in Anantag District is a very important watershed in the march of events in Kashmir. A telling saying doing rounds in Srinagar is Batta Chael, Mussalman Gael, Sikh Phoel" The first part of the statement refers to the migration of the Kaslimiri Pandits, the second part to a misleading albeit popular notion that Muslims got annihilated, but the most significant thrust was the punch line at the end that the Sikhs blossomed. Again in early days of the recent migration, a slogan "Mussalman Sikh Bhai Bhai, Yeh Hindu quam Kahanse Aayi" was also heard. After mass migration of the Pandits from Kashmir, some of the Sikhs did occupy the vacated houses of the Pandits. The fact that Pakistan had extended overt and covert support to the movement of Khalistan can make one believe that some Pakistan supported agencies may also have helped and supported Sikhs in the valley. Nonetheless the Sikhs of Chattisinghpora have become innocent victims of Muslim fundamentalism, sponsored and fully backed by Pakistan, is in keeping with the highest tradition of the Sikhs, a community known for their valour and sacrifice. We as Kashmiri Pandits, can never forget the supreme sacrifice made by Guru Teg Bahadur, the 9th Guru, for the Pandits.

Apart from mass migration of the Pandits since Jan 1990, we had Wandhama, Sangrampora, Gool, and now we have Chattisinghpora.

And when we take note of the fact that even a casual study of the articles in this Annual of the 'Global Diaspora' of the Kashmiri Pandits brings out that an event like, Chattisinghpora could be in the making and predictable, one cannot but admire the in-depth study and efforts made of the subject of this Annual by the contributors of the articles, by Dr. B. K. Moza, Rajiv Sapru, Nivarani Kaul, Pratibha Moza and those connected with bringing out the Annual, which on behalf of the Kashmir Sabha, I feel happy to acknowledge and feel thankful for. Again we cannot but acknowledge and feel thankful to the publicitton Management Committee lead by Sri M. K. Ogra and Sri P. L. Sapru, and to our other members for all that they have been able to do and achieve. To the advertisers we feel beholden for their co-operation and help.

4 *Bandhu Ji: We Owe Him an Apology*

K. N. Pandita, Jammu

[The Author, Dr. K.N. Pandita is the former Director, Centre of Central Asian Studies, Kashmir University.]

Yagnopavit ceremony of the male children in our family was underway. Ours was a very traditional Kashmiri Pandit family in Baramulla. I was so small that I can with great difficulty recollect only dim and shadowy impressions of the occasion. I think it was around the year 1933.

The ceremony was in full bloom and I, as one to be initiated into Brahmanical order along with my two elder brothers, hopped in and out of the guest rooms out of sheer thrill. There were many women; old and young clad in white Saris. I was used to seeing them clad in baggy pherans with a cumbersome headgear called tarangeh. The sight was uncommon and strange. I distinctly remember the women in this new dress were a bit shy and reserved and chuckled and smiled at each other but certainly not uncomfortable. I could not make out the why of things, being only a six-year-old lad.

In the guestroom, elderly persons in meticulously clean dress sat reclining against the cushions. The hubble bubble (jajeer) and qahwa in samovars made frequent rounds.

One of the persons, certainly not old and very elderly, but the centre of attention of everybody, spoke gently to the people present there. I did not understand what he said and why the audience listened with rapt attention. Nevertheless he was the centre of attention.

Then the elderly womenfolk in our house and the numerous female guests who had come to participate in the ceremony entered the guest room and with folded hands said Namaskar to the person of central attention and left. This was an unusual scene for me. The person was neither clad in saffron nor was he too elderly nor was anything very significant about him. Why did everybody then approach him with veneration? I could never make out anything of this situation.

The ceremony, as we all know, was a protracted one. Near about dusk, when we all stood around the huge agni kund with atehfol in our hands and the hymns being chanted, there was a pause. The same person, to whom everybody showed his or her veneration, began speaking. He spoke in a halting language, with confidence and in all seriousness. I did not understand what he said. But I do remember that he used the words pheran, nervar, tarangeh, dhoti etc. repeatedly. It was a mystery to me to make out what it meant to speak about the items of traditional clothing of our women folk.

It was Kashyap Bandhu or Bandhu Ji as everybody called him. He was the centre of attention. He was speaking to the people present there and he was the one who stole the show.

Bandhu ji had started his social reform movement for the Pandit community. He had given a call to discard the baggy pheran and its accessories, cumbersome, ugly and odd as these were. He had given a call that Pandit women should shift to sari (dhoti in our local language).

An aunt of mine originally belonged to the village from which Bandhu Ji hailed namely Gyur in Tral. This aunt came from a very respectable and traditional Pandit family from her father's side. She had died at a young age, but her family members on her father's side maintained close relations with us. Since they were the neighbours of Bandhu Ji (though they had later on migrated to Srinagar and lived in Ageh Hammam) in Gyur village, they were greatly influenced by his social reform programme. My father, Pandit Shanker Nath had very close and very friendly relations with late Pandit Maheshwar Nath Bhat of Gyur, settled in Ageh Hammam, and accepted his influence. This was the channel how Bandhu ji came to know my father and uncle and had agreed to be the guest of honour on the Yagnopavit ceremony in our house.

There was a lot of talk in our house about Bandhu ji's social reform programme. The women folk secretly asked one another whether they looked odd or not in the sari dress. My father was always an imposing personality and he was held in great awe and respect by all our relatives. Since he had asked his own womenfolk to change over to sari, womenfolk in relation, one and all, submitted to his

diktat; thus it was through my father's propagation that the new dress became popular among most of our relations in Baramulla district.

Bandhu ji was a man of vision. Greatly influenced by Arya Samaj movement during his study period in Lahore, he wanted to introduce the Vedic tradition into the moth-eaten Pandit culture and tradition. It was not only the apparel of womenfolk that he wanted to change. In fact, Bandhu ji wanted the Pandits to give up the obsolete, outdated and meaningless rituals and traditions that had become a cumbersome burden. He was the one who introduced the Arya Samaj movement among the Pandits.

Kashmiri Pandits are wont to gauge the success or failure of Bandhu Ji's movement through a narrow perspective. It has to be remembered that the Pandit ritualistic culture is rooted in five thousand years of its history. The Pandit has developed a mindset too difficult to be changed in a short span of time. What Bandhu ji was attempting to do was making some inroads into that obsolete and redundant culture.

I do not think any other Pandit leader had the futuristic vision of a society of Pandits way back in early thirties. Bandhu ji was not just a social reformer, as the Pandits know him. He was essentially a political observer, trying to understand the present in terms of past and interpreting it in terms of future.

Bandhu ji's social reform movement spread out in the length and breadth of Kashmir. With a few years, the idea of replacing the dress and some rituals was taken up by most of the Pandit families. In Srinagar city, followed by the towns of Anantnag, Sopore and Baramulla, Bandhu ji's social reform movement gathered momentum. The Pandit women composed verses to commemorate the demise of the awkward dress called pheran and its accessories and welcomed the onset of a new era for them. They used the epithet "Tarachand Bulbul", as Tarachand was his real name and 'bulbul' because he was also a composer of verses in Kashmiri. May be he used 'bulbul' as his pen - name in some of his Urdu verses.

The history of Pandit community, a very ancient community indeed, has no social reformers to make a mention about. Unfortunately, our seers and learned men were more a speculative lot engrossed in introspection. Little attention was paid to the material development of society. Naturally a reformer had a stupendous task to perform if he decided to radicalize the society.

Kalhana does not make any mention of any great social reformer. Abhinav Gupta, Vasubandhu, Mamat, Samkara, Laleshwari and others philosophized or pontificated. After the fall of the Hindu ruling house in early fourteenth century, the Pandit community of Kashmir was faced with steady decline in political power, in intellectual pursuits, in economic field and in social spheres. For next six and a half centuries after the Shahmiris assumed power in A.D. 1339, the Pandits of Kashmir witnessed their gradual decline and disintegration so much so that they ceased to be a factor to be reckoned with in the history of mediaeval Kashmir.

Those who survived the great vicissitudes of time did so at the cost of their once proud and powerful personality. Thus the Pandit learnt most effectively and efficiently the art of survival. It meant not only assumption of the status of the under-dog but also that of becoming the worst enemy of his own community. Absorbed by the imperative of physical survival, the Pandit had neither vision nor confidence to address social reforms within the community. The result was that he continued to carry on his feeble shoulders the burden of a ritualistic religion engrossed in traditions that were out of date with the advancing times. This, obviously, became too unbearable for some of them who could not muster enough fortitude, and succumbed to conversions, which they thought at least brought them some relief.

In this background, the emergence of Bandhu ji is to be assessed in historical terms. If I say that he was the first and so far the only great social reformer in our community, I may not be far away from the truth. Therefore Bandhu ji deserves to be given the most prestigious place in the annals of our history.

I know some of the members of our community did not like Bandhu ji's decision to join the National Conference to pursue his political objectives. Many even criticised and castigated him. He had to suffer their taunts and abuses.

The fact of the matter is that Bandhu ji was himself a sincere, honest and dedicated person who had a vision of future. He knew without a shadow of doubt that the minuscule community of Pandits was under political, economic and social oppression in Kashmir. He knew that only a miracle could preserve them and their cultural fund in their land of origin. But when Sheikh Abdullah and his National Conference appeared on the scene, particularly when the Sheikh converted the Muslim Conference into National Conference, Bandhu ji, out of his sheer nationalistic fervour thought that the impasse for the Pandits had been pierced and a ray of hope was visible. He threw his lot with the new ideology of nationalism championed by the Sheikh and his National Conference. Only this dispensation could ensure the perpetuation of the Pandit and his culture in Kashmir. Bandhu ji was hundred per cent right.

He was made a member of the NC Working Committee, the body that would take crucial decisions. There he could project and protect the rights of the Pandits as long as there were recipients of a liberal and nationalist view in that organization. Bandhu ji was right.

But the curtain fell when Bandhu ji came to know that nationalism did not carry the same meaning for Sheikh Abdullah as it carried for him. When on a controversial issue the Sheikh sternly told Bandhu ji in a N.C. Working Committee meeting that he was first a Muslim and then a nationalist, Bandhu Ji opened his eyes as to whether he was comrading a proper company. Anybody reading his write - up "Why I resigned from National Conference" will have no doubt that Bandhu ji had in the beginning, full faith in NC's nationalism and believed that this was the safest political party for the Pandits to cling to. But unfortunately, the Sheikh had betrayed him. That was the parting of ways. Had the national leadership in New Delhi any sense of history, Bandhu Ji's resignation from NC should have served them as eye-opener. But, sadly, Bandhu Ji's community had been written off the day Kashmir was given a special status in Indian Union and Article 370 was incorporated to insulate Kashmir's exclusionist and isolationist syndrome.

Bandhu ji left this mortal world many years ago. Never did the National Conference or any other social or cultural organization in Kashmir think of commemorating him and recognizing his contribution. Even our own community, too, has hardly done anything in the direction that would be called a befitting tribute to Bandhu ji. Those who knew him personally and are knowledgeable about his works are quitting the scene. Only a handful of them are still surviving. They should voluntarily contribute whatever they know of Bandhu ji to be consigned to the annals of history. This is a religious duty. We owe Bandhu ji an apology.

In this background, I salute the distinguished member, and office bearers of Kashmir Sabha, Calcutta who have taken upon them the task of collecting whatever information they could, and compile it in a special Bandhu ji number in memory of this great son of Kashmir. In particular, I appreciate the dedication of Dr. B.K. Moza, who met many people during his recent visit to Jammu and exhorted them to furnish him with as much information as was possible on Bandhu ji. At the same time, I hold myself a culprit for having written thousands of pages on current history and politics of the region but not a word on Bandhu Ji except Urdu to English translation of about half a dozen of his letters and write-ups. Should circumstances permit, I would like to make up this deficiency.

5 Pandit Kashyap Bandhu: The Karam-Yogi Par Excellence

Dr. Rajiv Kumar, Jammu

Having had the privilege and good fortune of being brought up under his hawkish supervision, I wonder how to begin writing about the only complete human being I have known. Most appropriate would have been to call him a rebel because as we try to recall various stages of his life we find he always rebelled against the established norms the moment he found them against the long term interests of the society. I would most likely call him - a man with a one track mind. Because I have never found him compromising on principles that he very strongly believed in. He was never subject to influence even from those who were very dear to his heart. Who can such a man be - but a Karam Yogi - who lived his long life sticking to his principles and when the end came he stood by them - all alone.

GAIROO is a village named after Mata Gauri Shori whose temple is situated therein about 2 KMs towards south-east of Awantipore. Therein lived a poor Kashmiri Pandit family of three brothers and a widowed sister headed by the only married brother, Pt. Thakur Bhat. The eldest child was born in Chaitra Krishna Pakhsha on Navmi [which coincides with 29th March 2000, Wednesday] and was named Tara Chand. With due regards to the sentiments of the widowed sister, the infant was put in her lap, so that he would carry her husband's surname "Koul". This child was destined to be the tallest social reformer of the Pandit Community, the fountain head of our secular values, journalist par excellence and a rural development visionary - our own Karam Yogi of the 20th century, Pandit Kashyap Bandhu whose heart and soul were deeply entrenched in the soil of Kashmir.

During his childhood, in addition to learning and lessons in the village school he would tend sheep and cattle of the house. His extra-ordinary intelligence was recognised soon and he would surely be consulted on the matters of importance. But soon he was to go to Srinagar for post-primary education. He would live with an uncle in Sheshyar, Habbakadal-the Safayas. While being taken to Srinagar on foot his father while resting at Letpora took out his knife from the pocket and showed the sharpened edges to the young lad telling that he would slit the throat of the lad if we would come back home without completing his education. The lad remembered the scene vividly in his eighties as well.

Soon, the youngman, however rebelled. While in the Safaya house, he would not only be called upon to do the domestic errands but the neighbours would also call upon him to accompany their daughters alongwith "Chocha Syun" to their in-laws. The youngman ran away from the Safaya house and made his own living arrangements with Masterji's family at Age-Hamam. This was against the wishes of his father.

After passing Middle Level examinations, he started job hunting while still studying. On being informed that the Revenue Minister was coming back from Gulmurg he alongwith a few of his friends managed to appear before the Englishman at Narbal while he was resting. The youngman was enrolled as a Shajrakash in the Revenue Department and sent to Kolgam Tehsil. For sometime he was at Danow Kandi-Marg where he had a brief teenage romance as well with a beautiful Muslim lass. He again rebelled at the cost of his service. It so happened that Tehsildar Kolgam was coming down to Vessu to Devkoul's house along with family. As it grew dark, the advance party ordered the Numberdar's of all the villages enroute to make people stand on the path hold a burning paddy pola in hand to enlighten the path while the Tehsildar's party was passing. The young Tarachand influenced the Numberdar of the village where he was posted then, against this arrangement. The path through this village remained dark. Investigation followed and Tarachand lost his first job along with the hope of getting another under Maharaja's rule.

He went to Lahore and came under influence of the Arya Samaj Movement. Worked as a volunteer in Quetta and started using his pen against the establishment and in favour of the down-trodden. The power of his pen was soon recognised and he rose to become the Editor of the "Arya Gazette". Here he was renamed Kashyap Bandhu and he married Vimla. His rebellious nature made him land in the

prison for the first time when he was arrested among others in Sandar's case, having come under Bhagat Singh's influence.

In 1931, he returned to Kashmir and took upon himself the task of rebellion against established customs, dress code, and political thinking of his brethren - the Kashmiri Pandits. This was the only brief period in the recent past history of Pandits when they remained united under one banner of Sanatan Dharm Yuvak Sabha. He held sway over the masses through his bold pen writing the sarcastic "Challant" and "Pagal Ki Diary". The Pheran Pooch and Zooj gave way, so did the age-old custom of not marrying widows. Girls education got the thrust and the Pandits danced happily to his tune.

But the rebel in him would not die. A brief communal incident at Kanikoot and then in the down-town city impressed upon him the fragility of the KP's isolated political stand. Rebellious against the majority belief, he walked out of the Yuvak Sabha as well as the Martand, joined hands with Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah in 1938 and thus was born National Conference. Pt. Jia Lal Kilam remained shoulder to shoulder with him. A fine bond of friendship grew between Mirza Beg; and him probably because both had a rural background and had the problems of rural Kashmir uppermost in mind. The rebel in him did not lose any chance. In the early forties Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah while speaking to a Friday congregation at Hazratbal, spoke about the religion in a way so as to denigrate other religions as compared to Islam. Kashyap Bandhu along with Jia Lal Kilam resigned the same day from National Conference. The Muslim friends had to do a lot of cajoling and the tall man had to personally say sorry before the duo went back.

On the political scene the forties were years of turmoil. Kashyap Bandhu was in and out of the jail many a time. This gave him a lot of time to use his facile pen. Kesri was first brought on the scene. The Government banned it. Kesri was followed by "Desh". Both were edited by Kashyap Bandhu. During the post 1947 turmoil Bandhuji's priority was to attend to the needs of the migrants coming from areas devastated by tribals. He ensured that all the Pandits who had been forced to tear their sacred threads got it back through proper Yagnas at Maidan Chogol in Handwara. He ensured the safety of Sh.Keshav Nath Khaibri and family. This gentleman had married a Muslim lass of village Manzhar in Kopwara and lived there only. This incidentally was the only Pandit family in the whole of Manzhar/Halimatpora Nalla even upto the nineties.

Different people give different reasons for his not being included in the first ever Cabinet headed by the Sheikh. As far as I know, the reason was the rebel in him. He would not succumb to pressure or influence and would follow his one track mind decisions, which Sheikh thought was not good for his cabinet colleagues. Having been given the charge of Director General Dehat Sudhar and rehabilitation, he would always take his own decisions, although he was under the charge of Masheer Maal Mirza Afzal Beg.

Post 1953 scene, Kashyap Bandhu was incarcerated along with Sheikh and Beg. He refused to be influenced by Bakshi G.M. and although repeatedly cajoled by him, remained steadfast in his loyalty to the tall man. But lo and behold-when Sheikh took over the reins of power in 1975, he refused to join his cabinet because his one track mind believed Sheikh had taken a wrong decision.

Even between 1947 and 1953, the great man lived with Warikoo family only (with whom he lived right from early thirties) and drew a token salary of Rupees One hundred only and refused government accommodation or normal salary. Upon my enquiry he told me that all National Conference bigwigs had once decided that they should live simply, preferably in two room cottages, around Pologround and draw salary only as was required and should avoid ostentation. This one-track mind gentleman was the only person to stick to the vow taken.

Upon being entrusted the job of development of Sonawari in 1964, he believed he had done his job by the end of 1967. Any amount of persuasion by Sadiq Sahib did not make him change his mind.

This kind of attitude towards life was more pronounced on the domestic front. In the late forties his wife wanted him to construct a small house at Srinagar for the family - the three of them, Vibhu was

born. He refused. He believed the family strength was thirteen not three. He included his two brothers and their families in it. So he went ahead and constructed a tall four storey house enough to accommodate thirty people comfortably. The marriages in the family were all low key affairs. In my case he was looking for a Daan-Pass and Gaan-Pass Bahu. A girl who could take care of the kitchen and the cow. During the marriage only one or two members of each relation were invited. Only 25-30 people were there in the Baraat. I might have been probably the only groom who has gone to get married sitting in the backseat of the van. He was sitting in the front. There was no Gandun; Ghar Achun; Phir Saal etc. I was made to visit my Susral to accompany my wife even before they could ask for a Phir-Saal. (Can this ever be repeated, I wonder.)

Upon developing differences with the attitude of the Kashmiri Pandits he refused to come down to Srinagar even for consultations. Hordes Of gentlemen from the community dropped in for weeks but the gentleman's one track mind refused to budge. Sh H. N. Jattoo was the front runner but Bandhujee would not agree. The community bowed to the rebel. Dr. Peshin took over the reins. Whether that went in favour of the community or not only history will say.

Having had deep love for Kashmir and his village, he refused to leave even when everyone left. His wife moved down to Jammu, he refused to leave. His brother's family left the rebel turned Yogi. Finally, me and my mother also left. He said good bye. The man was into his eighties. He did not know from where his dinner was to come. But still he encouraged everyone in the family to move on - if it made them happy. He refused monetary support even from those who were very dear to him, even when he had no money. On my last meeting with him in October 1985 before I left for Ladakh alongwith family where I was transferred, he told me, that long back God had made a promise that he shall get his two time food, with two vegetables and a cup of curd all through. And this he got until the end.

On Dec the 18th 1985, he had his dinner and was in deep thought. The Radio was on. Suddenly he called for Ama Sheikh and asked him to call Pt. Radha Krishen, the local Doctor because he felt some pain in the chest. Ama ran fast. Within ten minutes Radha Krishen arrived. But Kashyap Bandhu had left his mortal body. The body was in sleeping posture but his eyes were open set on the photograph of Maa Jagat Amba.

Any better way to leave this mortal world? And that is how Karam Yogis leave.

6 *Emergence from Darkness*

Late Prem Nath Bazaz, Delhi

[Excerpt From Daughters of Vitasta]

Pandit Kashyap Bandhu, preacher, journalist and politician joined the Yuvak Sabha in summer 1931. As Tara Chand Koul, a youth of twenty, he had left Kashmir a decade earlier to seek fortune in India. In the course of extensive wanderings, he embraced Arya Samaj in Quetta, changed his name to Kashyap Bandhu and was selected by the elders of the proselytising Hindu sect for the job of a missionary. He studied Sanskrit and the holy scriptures under Vishwa Bandhu in a Samajist educational institution at Lahore. He fell in love with and married, in 1929, Vimladevi, daughter of Vishnu Dutta, A Kashmiri Pandit who had settled at Ferozepore. Kashyap Bandhu was editing the Arya Gazette, an Urdu weekly devoted to propagation of Samajist doctrines, when the political disturbances broke out in Kashmir. Despite his sincere admiration for Arya Samaj his deep attachment to homeland created yearning in his heart to return to the valley. He kept himself informed of the developments and made no secret of his desires and aspirations. So when he received a call from the Yuvak Sabha to come and participate in the struggle, he reached Srinagar in August 1931 along with his wife, joined the movement and forthwith distinguished himself as a tireless worker.

It was through the labours of Kashyap Bandhu and other workers of the Yuvak Sabha that the wearing of saree became popular within months of its introduction in Pandit homes. He employed the gift of the gab and his experience as preacher to influence public opinion. Subsequently Bandhu expended part of his inexhaustible energy to coax young but helpless widows to remarry and to end their avoidable misery. His labours bore fruit and more and more marriages were solemnised in the following years in Srinagar and other parts of the valley. Widow marriage ceased to carry any stigma with it and even the Sanatan Dharam purohiths recognised the validity of the religious rites performed to finalise the weddings. In the beginning, only poorer or fallen widows who were supportless came forward to brave the public ignominy but as time passed on and the number of widow marriages increased, better class parents gave assent to their widow-daughters to marry if they so desired. Widow marriage is not even today as common as the marriage of virgins in Pandit homes but now the position is different; those who oppose such marriages are reproached as unjust, cruel and myopic people devoid of human feelings. Even some aristocratic and orthodox families can be counted among those whose widowed daughters and daughters-in-law have remarried. Such unions are no more frowned upon. It is a great triumph for the cause of suffering women.

Another reform which the Pandit leaders attempted to introduce was curtailment of wasteful expenditure on marriage ceremonies and other festivals. Side by side, it was also suggested that the making of presents in the shape of ornaments or hard cash on the part of bride's parents should be regulated by social conventions. For some time prior to 1931 a tendency to give huge sums and present more precious ornaments than their financial condition warranted, was noticed in an increasing number of parents causing concern to the well-wishers of the community. The tendency to overspend on marriages was alarming and the poorer classes were hard hit. They were forced either to borrow from the userer or to reduce their standard of living and save pennies to meet the heavy expense on marriage ceremonies of their daughters.

Among Kashmiri Pandits there are no higher or lower classes. There are no multi-millionaires and practically no beggars; every member of the community more or less enjoys equal social status with others; so any innovation, if allowed to go unchallenged, affects all the members whether they like it or not.

Several cases of ruined families and harassed daughters were publicised creating a commotion in the community. The Yuvak Sabha, in consultation with the elite of Pandits, prepared schemes to restrain extravagant and ostentatious members from obnoxious practices and did its best to enforce them. But the more rigidly the plans were put into effect the more widespread the evil became. The endeavours

of the Sabha ended in complete failure. In 1944, another Organisation, the Social Sudhar Samiti, came into existence with a militant programme to achieve a similar objective. Gopi Kishen its President and several well-meaning elderly gentlemen including tireless Sham Lal Koul spent their time and energy in persuading Pandits to desist from pursuing the harmful course. Uma Razdan, an unassuming young lady, was the moving spirit of this body which laboured hard to achieve the objective. Dramas in Kashmiri were specially written and acted on the state to caricature evil practices and educate women. Squads of youths, were organised who picketed homes where wealth was lavishly squandered on marriages and other festivals. It all however came to nothing.

Things have been going from bad to worse and today the immoral system of dowry, unknown in Kashmir till 1931, is as much in vogue among Pandits as in any other Indian community. Many virtuous and comely girls are deprived of suitable matches because their parents cannot afford to pay large sums in cash or in the shape of ornaments to the guardian of the bridegroom. Shamelessly the Pandits who prized in the past virtues of contentment, simplicity and frugality, today strike bargains in terms of cash-gifts before matrimonial alliance is settled. Good men are shocked at the fall in moral standards but so far they have failed to find a solution to the problem. Perhaps a remedy lies with individuals who, by behaving honourably and rationally, can set examples for others. If anywhere example is better than precept, it is here. Unfortunately even many staunch supporters of the reform have been known in the past to honour pledges in breach than in observance. And so the situation aggravates.

To implement its social reform scheme in 1931, the Yuvak Sabha launched a vigorous campaign to educate public opinion. Advantage was taken of the excitement which had been generated by the political upheavals. The spacious grounds of

Shital Nath became the headquarters of the movement from where guns of publicity were fired and trumpets blown. Public meetings were held in every part of Srinagar which were largely attended. Efforts were made to enlist the cooperation of women in making the scheme a success. In the capacity of President of the Yuvak Sabha, I had to address numerous gatherings in the city, in towns and even in far off villages wherever Pandits live. The lively scenes of enthusiasm are still fresh in my mind. I distinctly remember a meeting which was attended by more than 3000 ladies at Alikadal when a wall had to be demolished to make a big compound adjacent to the meeting ground available to accommodate the unceasing flow of eager women. I also retain in my memory the clear impressions of a huge mile-long funeral procession of men and women which was carried out with a pheran and taranga borne on a plank in the middle, symbolising the death of the discarded attire. It ended at the crematorium on the bank of Dood Ganga. The years 1931-34 were full of zest when Pandit women took a glorious part in the regeneration of the community though in a restricted sphere. Vimla Kaul, Chandadevi, Deviki Koul, Sona Batni (nee Badri) Bazaz and several grown-up girls of the Trust schools were among those who played leading roles in organising the demonstrations.

It is not surprising that a few eager maidens enthused with the spirit of patriotism and love of the community should get opportunity of displaying qualities of leadership and earn encomiums of their co-religionists. But like their Muslim sisters, and for similar causes, their glory was short-lived.

The most important problem which attracted the attention of the new leadership was the backwardness of women in education. It is true that the Women's Welfare Trust schools had become popular and hundreds of pupils annually sought admission in them; but, by and large, the overwhelming majority of the girls was afforded no opportunity to attend school. In the new atmosphere of revolutionary thinking generated by the unprecedented upsurge, a persistent demand for more schools was voiced from almost all parts of the State. The Trust raised the Vasanta Middle School to the high standard which has been doing splendid work in preparing girls for the University. It has turned out more than 500 matriculates in the past and generally shown excellent results in examinations. At times, the percentage of successful students has been as high as 94. Much credit for this good work must go to the Head Mistress, Gora Batni Shangloo, a trained graduate, herself a

product of the school. She is assisted by a few other educated girls imbued with a spirit of sacrifice and devotion.

The Vasanta High School is now housed in a building which was constructed by the Trust at a cost of nearly Rs. 71, 000. On 2nd October, 1956, Yuvraj Karan Singh performed the inaugural ceremony of the building when the elite of the city people attended to admire the excellent work of the Trust.

Denominational schools too sprang into life. The Punjabi Hindus opened Arya Putri Patshala at Wazir Bagh; the Sanatan Dharam Sabha, the Anjuman Himayat-i-Islam and the Sikhs too started schools of their own to educate girls on lines of their respective cultural patterns. The Government was forced to ear-mark an increasing amount in its annual budgets for the advancement of female education. Every year a few new primary schools were opened in the towns and large villages or, where conditions warranted, existing primary schools were raised to the status of middle standard.

In 1931, there was only one institution where university education was imparted to students in the valley. Though there was no ban on the admission of girls in the S. P. College, only boys numbering over 500 were on its rolls. Nearly two dozen girls had matriculated but in the absence of adequate arrangements for higher studies they had given up further pursuance of studies. It was a bold idea when in the spring of 1932, Vimla Koul, wife of Kashyap Bandhu, who had qualified for the university course before her marriage, applied for admission in the college. A problem was created for the educational authorities but loathe to face adverse public criticism, the Government wisely provided facilities to the young lady to secure admission. It was a strange spectacle to find a solitary woman moving among hundreds of young men or sitting in the class room side by side with them. Vimla had to undergo trials but she persevered to the last. Her boldness and quiet dignity encouraged many hesitant girls to follow her and seek admission. Before 1940 more than fifty girls were on the rolls of the S. P. College and when another Degree College was started by the Government to meet the ever-increasing demand for expansion of higher education, Pandit girls were equally solicitous with boys to enroll themselves in the registers of the new institution.

7 *Kashyap Bandhu - A Man Who Awoke A Somnolent Society*

Dwarka Nath Munshi, New Delhi

A hundred years ago, a boy was born in the small simple village of Guer, about 40 km from Srinagar in Kashmir. His parents named him Tara Chand. In a short time, he also came to be called 'Bulbul'. As the boy grew up, he lived his name to the full, for he was bright as a star (Tara), gentle as the moon (Chand) and sweet as the lovely little bird (Bulbul) that wakes up late rising somnolents with its delightful and persistent notes.

The boy was destined to make a prominent mark in the history of Kashmir and especially in the life of Kashmiri Pandits. Here I would take a minute to talk of our past history only as a backdrop of his work. We have been relating that history on most occasions and I would desist from going into those off repeated details. I will speak of it in the barest outline and as I have viewed it, and what broad lessons would be drawn from it, though not as self righteous victims alone.

For a thousand years before him these meek citizens given to gentle pursuits of spiritual quest, philosophy, education, agriculture and other peaceful mundane activities had been driven to the edge of extinction by waves of brutish fanatical invaders as well as a cavalcade of rapacious local rulers. At one time they had been reduced to no more than eleven families. The rest of the entire Hindu population had been forcibly converted to Islam or had gradually decayed by falling prey to destructive customs and rituals. Divided by Varna or caste, they could never stand united or put up a joint front in any activity, least of all in their own security and defence. All this had bred in them fatal urges for thinking or caring for nothing beyond the self at whatever price.

It was in a world of such background and atmosphere that Tara Chand appeared on the scene. Little is known about his early years. No authentic or reliable records, generally of those times, of the socioeconomic or political life of the people are available. All that they would have experienced was that somewhere, far away resided, in the big palace, the great and all-powerful Maharaja popularly called the 'Sarkar' or the sovereign of the humble 'Riyaya'. If there was a 'madrassa' or 'maktab' or 'pathshala' (school), it must have been miles away, where the boys would go and sit under the shade of the trees, and the 'Ustad' or 'Panditji' (teacher) would be taking his nap and a light massage from the boys. Then the bell would ring and the boys would run back home to lend a hand at domestic chores.

How the little Tara Chand must have been affected in that isolation, and what influences must have taken hold of his mind, can be anybody's guess. But as we view him as a grown up young man, he was all charm and decency. He had left Kashmir for the Punjab plains to seek a career or pursue the ideals which lie appears to have developed from his early age. There is no doubt that he must have been deeply influenced and motivated by the freedom movement in India under Gandhiji's leadership. For, when he descended on the scene in Kashmir in the early thirties, he showed clear, unmistakable trace of that influence in each word and deed.

In the meantime, he had taken a wife who was a school teacher. Both husband and wife would be seen in Khadi apparel of Dhoti-kurta of the husband and Sari-chola of the wife. Both looked serene, cute and, indeed, special.

Tara Chand had by now also assumed the name of Kashyap Bandhu meaning the brother and the servant of Kashmir, and had straightway plunged into the service of the people, to arouse them to the fast-changing times, to live and work, to think and act for people's emancipation, as India as a whole was striving to do.

7.1 *TRAUMATIC TIMES*

Kashmir had not, however, remained untouched but had undergone a deep and painful change of its own. A Muslim Conference had been established and Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah had emerged as the Supreme leader of the Muslim Community. The whole atmosphere was surcharged with Muslim Communalism and against the Maharaja's 'autocratic' rule. In 1931 it turned violent and inexplicably

they attacked Kashmiri Pandits, who were in a negligible minority and yet were being represented as the Dogra Maharaja's own, and exploiters of the majority community.

The first large-scale violence occurred on July 13, 1931. The Muslims, though only some sections of them, had been subjected to communal propaganda against the Hindus that is the Kashmir Pandits (KPs). A protest march by the agitating Muslims was met by some excessive police action which exploded into a wide conflagration. The marchers turned their wrath on the Kashmiri Pandits, especially in Srinagar's central market of Maharaj Gunj, indulging in loot, arson and wide-scale destruction and some deaths.

This was a wholly new and undreamt of experience for Kashmiris as a whole. Earlier, the Pandits had suffered persecution and oppression for centuries under the alien Muslim invaders, as I said a while ago. But now, for long years, the Kashmiri stock was enjoying an exemplary communal harmony. Truly was it held that the Muslims and Pandits were two brothers, pursuing two different faiths in perfect mutual affection, respect and trust which was the envy of many an outsider.

July 31 was thus the defining episode foreshadowing the State's trying times to come. The wounds inflicted by the occurrence were not allowed to heal, but to rather fester and deepen. For KPs the trauma was essentially of betrayal of trust which created a sense of insecurity and darkness.

7.2 THE POLE STAR PANDIT

It was at such a time that Kashyap Bandhu emerged as a pole star to work for the emancipation of the confused and depressed Kashmiri Pandit community.

To analyse a man's life, it is necessary to know not merely what he does but also what he avoids to do, or purposely leaves alone or undone. Thus, we see that he did not harp on the oppression and harm done to the community as much as he sought to strengthen it by infusing courage and confidence and self-reliance as positive action, which would be the right response for our long-term salvation. His emphasis on social reform, on developing modern outlook in day-to-day living, on power and dignity of labor, on empowering the meek and the timid by collective voice and action, all flowed from these Gandhian principles and emphasis was directed to achieving this central purpose.

It is instructive and interesting to see that there was an aspect of subtlety and dual purpose to almost everything he undertook for the common people's welfare. For instance, one of his first priorities was to develop a suitable place in Srinagar for the community to congregate every week, in a spiritual and joyous healthy seating. He selected a splendid site for the purpose and went to work on it development. This was at a toe of the sacred Hari Parbat, where all out Devis and Devtaas reside. Atop the gentle slopes of the hillock at this point resides Goddess Hari, resplendent in glowing Vermillion and decked in fragrant marigold and rose. On the opposite side, lay vast fields of almond orchards and enormous stretches of shimmering waters reaching to the foot of Mata Ragnya's abode at Khir Bhawani.

This glorious, environmentally refreshing and spiritually elevating point needed to be enlarged to accommodate the growing numbers that flocked there every Sunday morning. So Bandhuji called upon the youths to cut a new pathway away and around it, which yielded the desired space. This seemingly single objective carried in itself a few other significant ones. It attracted the generally stay-at-home people, women in particular, to come out into the open, healthy environs for a long morning, Parikrama in communion with nature and the divine, and in step with others to establish a social closeness and to take up boldly some manual labour as a rewarding exercise.

Amazingly our women-folk were drawn powerfully to these Sunday prayers and social intermingling. Here I would like to give you the example of my own mother who was a young widow of about 27 years and I as a little boy of four summers hung on to her most of the time. But she would never leave the threshold of our sprawling house and garden, attired in the customary Pheran and Taranga (head-gear). As if by divine interference, she one day decided to change to sari

as Bandhuji had propounded. She felt a new spirit surging within and would regularly attend the Sunday meeting at Hari Parbat, taking me along and returning with a light heart and step.

On one such morning. Bandhuji hoisted out Community flag at the holy spot. He then brought out a knife in the right hand and with it slashed his left arm. As blood gushed out in thick drops, he poured it at the flag staff base to sanctify it, and bear it as witness to the vow of life-long service to the community. The entire audience stood up in awe and solemnity to make a covenant with Ma Hari, looking from above, to abide by all-round social reform in the society as delineated by Bandhuji. It was a unique and memorable event in our life, inscribing within us, with the resounding notes of the slogan 'Jai Kara-Jar Har Mahadev' the spirit of courage and selfless sacrifice. The memory of that magnificent moment still shines in the heart of the lad of the four tender summers who lives to relate today the unforgettable experience.

The changes that followed were pleasantly spontaneous. Men folk started taking to dhoti or Pyjama/Kurta and gradually to more manageable caps in place of the never-ending yards of the 'Dastaar'. For women in particular, the Sari system of dress was a great liberating act, especially in the headgear. The Taranga involved layers of the Kalpush (a cap) with taltchuk (an embroidered adornment), the Zuji, over the cap, then the taranga of several carefully laid out layers of cotton strip round the head, and on top of it all the 'Putch' a longer Zuji going from the crown of the head down to the ankles, and finally the wodapallav of fine cotton or Pashmina drapery over it all.

As you, the reader would have experienced even in following these complex intricate details, it was a tedious time-taking and tiring exercise and demanded assistance of a second person, expert in the process of placing these expensive items in proper place at each step. The sari had dispensed with it all, at one stroke, with just a flick covering the head with ease and elegance. I guess in hindsight that, apart from acquiring a smart new visage, we integrated our identity with the Hindus in the plains as also shed the laze-inducing alien system of dress which was representing the remnants of the Muslim invaders' way of covering themselves whole.

7.3 THE WATCHWORD: SOCIAL REFORM

Social reform had now become the watchword after the collective vow was taken. It came as a read answer to the numerous meaningless customs and sometimes ridiculous rituals such as at birth, weddings, festivals, birthdays, death, et all. The dowry system was the most hateful of all. It involved not only utter waste of scarce resources which often resulted in ruin. It also created sulk and bitterness and long-drawn quarrels and disputes, where it should have been mutual love and regard and close relationship between the parties concerned. The vow did produce a salutary effect, though only for a time before it started weakening and taking other alarming crude and proportions characteristics. Even so, there are many young men and even girls- the centre of this ritual-who abhor and reject those customs and prefer to observe Social Reform.

Among Bandhuji's many social reforms, his persistent advocacy of widow remarriage was taken regrettably with little seriousness or acceptability by the community. A pity it was, indeed, when we recall how numerous young widows, sometimes childless and helpless, sometimes with children but not enough means, would pass their lives in mortifying loneliness, Penury and social stigma or disdain, living from day to day at the mercy and sometimes cruelty of even 'their near relations, for no fault of theirs. Where some remarriages were solemnised, these were generally wickedly referred to as having been out of utter desperation or mindless bravado and even other unmentionable reasons. We hardly ever took it as emancipation.

The pathos of it all is heightened when we realise that, typical of the times and the negative influences we live in, we have now almost accepted with relative ease or resignation the trauma of divorce followed by remarriage, putting at stake the lives at least of their offspring, when we had resisted unthinkingly the ameliorative widow remarriage.

Times were, meanwhile, changing fast in political and even social fields and Kashmir was moving into the centre-stage. All the same, Bandhuji had promoted some basic tools of response activities of long-term meaning and value.

7.4 THE RISE OF MARTAND

One was the launching of 'Martand' in Urdu, the mouthpiece of Kashmiri Pandits and practically the first daily newspaper of Kashmir. Its popularity was instant and phenomenal. Not only did it enter every KP household regularly every morning, it made a niche for itself in every mind and heart there. Bandhuji poured his soul into it day after day and filled its columns with bold and fearless fight against injustice, with noble ideas and pointed comments, fiery patriotism and words of wisdom for one and all. Martand rose to great heights not only in Kashmir but as a medium of dependable information and interpretation of event even outside the state.

It is painful to say that such a useful and influential institution should have been so callously and incompetently handled and allowed to decline and decay later. Yet the name Martand continues to fire emotions, esteem, enthusiasm and pride in the hearts of us all, and we keep longing for it.

7.5 A HANDFUL OF RICE

To build institutions of physical or mental growth, to pave the way to enlightenment, to help those in need, to keep the community informed, enthused, involved or committed, to fight peaceful battles, all this and more simply needs money. Where would it come from, placed and circumstanced as we were then? Bandhuji had, therefore, to work out a magical novelty, the Mochchphol, translated literally into English, it means a 'handful of grain' say rice, our staple food. But the main idea behind it was for every family to keep aside every morning at least this much of rice taken out of what was being taken to the kitchen to cook for the family, and that would hardly make any difference. At the end of the month, a collector would come and receive this donation and deposit it at the central store. It was from there that part of the collection would be distributed among the needy, and the remaining would be sold in the market fetching money for funding the diverse activities of the community Organisation, the Yuvak Sabha.

Mochchphol represented a lofty, yet easy and eminently affordable sacrifice equally from the haves and the less fortunate, on one hand, and promoting a social equality and consciousness of helping the needy and the community organisation, on the other.

7.6 THE POLITICAL PLAZA

Meanwhile, the natural flux of time brought fast political changes in the country and the State. The social milieu could not be immune to it. Kashmir in the late thirties was rapidly moving to the centre stage.

India's freedom struggle had created new aspirations and compulsions among the State people at large. Even the miniscule Pandits were turning politically more conscious. The small band of leaders who had collected under the Yuvak Sabha and around Kashyap Bandhu, started feeling different urges, thinking in different directions and tones, and developing varied political views, relating to the role and rights of the minority KPs.

The Muslim majority's leadership, on their part, also changed their strategy and stance, giving up the communal flag for a progressive nationalist and secular one. Bandhuji, following his long held convictions and instincts, felt more at ease with this new stance, and soon lent them support in their newly adopted political assertions. It bestowed significant credibility to the National Conference in replacing the Muslim Conference. Nevertheless, he continued to work in the social and developmental sphere rather than directly in politics. When Kashmir got people's popular government at Independence, he took up the important charge of rural reconstruction and resettlement of the uprooted and the weak. This was much in tune with his life-long mission and he acquitted himself very well.

Unfortunately, his relationship with this new setup was not as enduring as he would have wished, and for sober reasons. Working within the majority ruling establishment, and more particularly with the leader Sheikh Abdullah, he felt increasingly unhappy with the actualities vis-a-vis the promises and hopes that had been generated, especially among the minority sections. An accompanying piece in this issue, which is a translation of the great leader's own article in the then *Desh* of Srinagar, throws more detailed and authentic light on it. This was first published in the NAAD of AIKs in its March 1993 issue. The more he strove for a proper balance, the more he got disillusioned. He soon decided that it was now time to work for a just order from outside rather than stay fruitlessly within. It did not take him long thereafter to say good-bye.

However, his creative faculties would not let him rest. His love and leanings for mass communication led him to energise the famous '*Desh*' and fill it with progressive and even revolutionary views and fearlessly and unceasingly. His insight into the future was phenomenal and his style of expressing as forceful, subtle, ironic, as the occasion demanded. His feelings for the Pandits were always tender and concerned and sometimes foreboding would here mention an example of it which contained in the emotionally painful little piece about the last four Kashmiri Pandits that would have perished one by one by the new millennium, that is now. Lamented he thus "one of them will die and three others will cremate him and so on till the last one has no one to carry his cortege. The body would thereupon be buried by the neighbouring Muslims marking, the end of the KP community. Only a ghost of the buried would roam and scream in the night." This was, of course, apocryphal, but a deeply piercing comment both on the majority Muslims for their callous and hostile attitude to the KPs, and, for us, to underline the need to be more alive to the situation and remain vigilant. And how close a prophetic vision it eventually turned out to be!

As Bandhuji's sensitive spirit watches us from above, let us prove that we are not the children of abyss, and we will do what we have to do to achieve our own renaissance. We trust that what we will do will not only better our own condition but will make a contribution to the success of the nation's renaissance and towards identification of the century ahead of us as the Indian century. That will bring his soul solace in heaven.

It may well be said that this polestar Pandit lighted out way out of the obstructive trivialities into bold emancipative action.

Having attempted to portray Kashyap Bandhu and his work dispassionately, I must confess that I may not have done full justice to the subject in the circumstances we are placed today in this regard.

How did he frame the agenda of his life and mission, what influences had shaped his simple but essentially powerful and charming personality, what were the factors that had given him the extraordinary vigour and virtue of persistence and persuasion, what had made him a seer who could see the future, and many more questions arise in the mind but remain unsatisfied. For there are no records and references of his life and especially of his enormous work that one could find. The priceless volumes he produced of *Martand* and *Desh* and *Kesari* and the countless public addresses he made are just not available. The volumes of the papers, if they were filed properly and regularly, would yield a rich crop, but alas these are beyond our reach and may well have been destroyed. The reader will, I am sure, take this in view in assessing the value of what has been offered here.

This is in essence an appreciation and interpretation of the work of a visionary who was much larger than what we could see.

8 Kashyap Bandhu - The Great Social Reformer of Kashmiri Pandits

Somnath Dhar, New Delhi

His name was Pandit Tara Chand Koul, born in a Sanatan Dharam Brahmin family in rural Kashmir. At a very young age, he moved down to the plains of Punjab, to seek brighter pastures. In Lahore, he studied Sanskrit and the holy scriptures under Vishwa Bandhu, in an Arya Samajist educational institution. Later, in the town of Quetta (NWFP) he embraced Arya Samaj and adopted the new name of Kashyap Bandhu.

Perhaps, observing that the young man had the gift of the gab and command over the Urdu language, he was selected by the Samajis for proselytising work. He also used the gift of writing to edit the Arya Gazette, an Urdu weekly devoted to the propagation of Samajist doctrines. Much later, in Kashmir, he edited an Urdu daily, Martand, touching mainly the burning issues of the period in the Valley. He wrote profusely under the pseudonym of 'BULBUL'.

Even when he was away from home, Kashyapji's love for Kashmir remained steadfast. He kept in close touch with the happenings in his home town, especially his community in the Valley.

In Lahore, he married a Brahmin girl, Vimla Kaul. She was an active and spirited young graduate. In her own way, she turned a path-breaker, when in 1932, she joined Sri Pratap College, Srinagar, an exclusively male educational institute. She withstood pressure, strain and criticism, in equal measure, stoically, as a solitary female amongst hundreds of male students, was expected to do. This step of hers opened the gates of the college and other educational institutions for women admission seekers in subsequent years.

Vimla worked as a teacher in a government school in Srinagar. Later, after obtaining the M. Ed. degree from London University, she became the Inspectress of girls schools in Srinagar.

Bandhuji, though resident in Lahore, yearned to come back to Kashmir. And, the time came in 1932, when Yuvak Sabha (earlier Fraternity) of Srinagar, noticing crusader's zest in him, invited Bandhuji to join them in their struggle for the emancipation of women in general and Kashmiri Pandit community in particular.

Bandhuji and Vimla readily accepted the invitation of the Yuvak Sabha and came to Kashmir. Here they dedicated themselves to advocating social and other reforms in the Kashmiri Pandit community and tirelessly worked to implement them as much as the Kashmiri Pandit community's psyche was ready to accept at that point of time.

A brief note on the conditions prevailing in Kashmir is, I feel, just appropriate.

The Kashmiri Pandit community was in a pathetic state. Many ills, alien to them, had got imposed on them through successive foreign invasions, for a couple of centuries. The result was that the men folk turned fatalists, were indolent and licentious. They took out their sadism on womenfolk by wielding high handedness over them. Women were confined in the four walls of the home, given no freedom and subjected to extreme strain at a very young age. They were deprived of education and tied in nuptial chord at very young age. The birth of a girl child was considered inauspicious-Brahm Hatya (assassination of Brahma).

Girl widows who had never even seen their husbands, were aplenty and obliged to live pathetic lives at the grudging generosity of their family. Remarriage of widows was unthinkable, unmentionable and was attached religious and moral stigma. Polygamy, on the other hand, crept into the erstwhile monogamous Pandit community.

Women had almost shattered spirit. Seclusion, unabashed discrimination between male and female progeny, early marriages, endless childbirths and malnutrition took away the god-given sheen from their beauty and vigour. Mentally dispirited and intellectually starved, Kashmiri women presented a sad spectacle.

Mid-nineteenth century onwards, Christian missionaries had been trickling into the Valley. They were literally shocked by the prevailing conditions in Kashmir on the whole and of women in particular. Quietly, they started mobilising their energy and resources to attend to this situation. First things first : It was to tackle the appalling health conditions. In make-shift arrangements and against considerable opposition, to start with, their undeterred efforts were bringing considerable change on the health front of the women.

Next on their agenda, and by 1880s, the missionaries turned to mass literacy, especially for women. The orthodox and the reactionaries among the Kashmiris opposed their endeavours, as they had done earlier on health programmes. But, the persistence of missionaries continued. The Christian Missionary Society school, first of its kind, was inaugurated in Srinagar, to impart liberal and scientific education among the young men. Next they started a parallel institution for girls, namely, the CMS Girls School and staffed it with lady missionaries. Despite facing shock-response initially, the missionaries continued their work.

Though, by and large, women's education was opposed, there appeared a few sensitive thinkers among the Pandit community itself-Pandit Hargopal Kaul, Pandit Janaki Nath Kaul, and others, who gave tacit approval to women's education and volunteered to cooperate with the government. A couple of government schools for girls opened in Srinagar. But the girls could never make it to high school level.

The early thirties of the century, for various reasons, witnessed a sudden change of heart; Women's education was considered necessary for the community's upliftment.

Simultaneously, the Women's Welfare Trust, sponsored a Women's League. Its job was to debate over other social evils besetting the community and, evolve methods to achieve all-round progress.

By now, the enlightened ruler, Maharaja Hari Singh, well-entrenched in western thinking, made women's upliftment one of his prime objectives. Liberal grants-in-aid were given to institutions where education was imparted to girls. The Women's Welfare Trust gained considerably by this financial aid.

The Maharaja, in 1929, sponsored the Women's Welfare Association with the object of dispelling illiteracy, through other media as well, by introducing vocational training and health improvement schemes in order to liquidate destitution among women. Recreation parks were opened for women, so that they come out of isolation. The Trust, opened Sewa Sadans for destitute women, aspiring to be self-supporting. Instructions in handicrafts, spinning, embroidery, tailoring and 3 Rs. were given to struggling women at Sewa Sadans. This approach also achieved the aim of adult literacy among women. A legislation, similar to the Sharda Act 1929 in India, was introduced in Kashmir as well. Thus was the marriage age for girls raised to 15 and for boys to 18. Thereby legal sanction was imposed against child marriages.

The year 1931 turn out to be a year of profound significance in Kashmir : the revolt against the Dogra rule, autocracy and despotism; crusade for social change among the Kashmiris on the whole. Pt. Prem Nath Bazaz, a prominent leader of Kashmir, characterised it as a "philosophical revolution"-practically a revolt against most ills of Kashmiri society. Loud shouts of 'freedom' resounded in the air

The following years, 1931-38 turned into years of turmoil : communal riots; a divide in Kashmiris on religious basis; loud assertions for freedom; and a big shake-up in conservative minds.

The radical Yuvak Sabha, meanwhile, brought into sharp focus all the issues domoralising the Kashmiri Pandit community. It was at that point of time that Kashyap Bandhu joined the Yuvak Sabha. He gave a new thrust to women's issues. He worked tirelessly and distinguished himself as a reformer par excellence.

A change in apparel- a new look- among Kashmiri Pandit women, formed the first part of the reform package. Women were entreated to discard clumsy and alien dress ensemble-Pheren Taranga- and

wear Saree. Kashyap Bandhu spearheaded this social crusade. He addressed hundreds of public meetings to make women accept the dress change. Songs in Kashmiri language were composed by poets like Dina Nath 'Dilgir' to motivate Kashmiri Pandits and mobilise its acceptance.

Resistance to the said change of women's dress was stiff at first. Orthodox women rebutted:

ताराचन्द बुलबुलो, प्रस ना ट्रावोय पुच त नखार !

The radicals sent out different yet powerful signals.

We have witnessed them go on a rampage and make bonfires of Pheran-Taranga of their womenfolk. Young urchins pulled down Pooch from elder women, or, attached small brooms to the hanging Pooch, shouting:

प्रीत चोड ट्राव, धोती राज जिन्दाबाद !

The cogent preacher and a powerful writer, Bandhuji, had the oratorical gift to influence people and educate public opinion. The spacious ground of Shital Nath, the shrine of Hari Parbat, etc., places were the popular launching pads for his mission. There he addressed thousands of people to shake their somnolence. Kashyapji's speeches, in whichever corner of the State, he delivered them, had no repetitions. At Hari Parbat and Sheetal Nath, schemes and movements for other aspects of social reform in Kashmiri Pandit community were hatched. People would sing in chorus :

It was Kashyap Bandhu who renamed Aatwar Sunday Sharika Var, thus dedicating the day to goddess Sharika-the patron goddess of the Kashmiri Pandit community. We have seen him addressing one such meeting, when he made a deep cut in his left arm and pledged himself to the service of the Kashmiri Pandit community. He used the columns of the Martand to throw light on the burning issues of the day.

There was resistance and there was acceptance to his movement. But the tireless efforts of the couple-Bandhuji and Vimla as well other zestful women and dynamic Yuvak Sabha volunteers, showed results: wearing Saree became acceptable at last. Pheran- Taranga ensemble was cremated on the banks of Dood Ganga, Srinagar. It was a spectacle worth watching!

The issue of widow remarriage turned out rather ticklish. Whereas persistent Yuvak Sabha members and Kashmiri Pandit humanists had launched a crusade to socially accept widow remarriage, the Sanatan Dharam Sabha meetings dominated by obscurantists, considered widow remarriage against the tenets of Hinduism, and opposed it tooth and nail. Bandhuji and other youthful crusaders put a simple formula for introspection to the community : Is widow remarriage necessary? Or, is it to be pooh-poohed? Heated debates went on between the orthodox, who considered the move as moral, and the reformists, who considered enforced widowhood, cruel and barbarous.

The law was on Bandhuji side. He quietly yet persistently coaxed young helpless widows to remarry. Many men married widows with due religious rites. The enlightened Maharaja made royal pronouncements legalising widow remarriage.

The next issue to be tackled was extravagance and wasteful expenditure on occasions like marriages, yagnopavits and other functions. How to curtail the evil in the community? The Yuvak Sabha, again under Bandhuji's leadership, went about educating people to accept austerity at functions. They laid down sanctions. The volunteers picketed the venues where lavish ceremonies were going on. They monitored their expenses. There was some success in the efforts of the volunteers but old habits die hard. The picture at the moment is shamelessly negative.

The political scene in the thirties was disturbing in Kashmir. On the one hand, Kashyap Bandhu and others were strong advocates of Pandit community's welfare; on the other, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, leader of the Muslim Conference, got passionately involved with the uplift of his Muslim brethren. A strong fear of a possible divide in Kashmiri society grew roots. There were communal riots-unheard of before in that passive society.

Fortunately and soon, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, Kashyap Bandhu and other enlightened Kashmiris showed vision. They joined hands under the banner of the National Conference, to bridge the divide and usher in communal harmony.

We have seen Kashyap Bandhu and Sheikh Sahib, hand in hand, and leading long procession, down Srinagar roads, singing unity songs; assure people of their oneness; and, rebuild confidence in them. The scene was emotion-filled-tears of joy running down the cheeks of the people. One can say that the Sheikh and Bandhuji turned out to be the prime architects of communal harmony in Kashmir.

Down the years, the social changes ushered in the Kashmiri Pandit community, has seen phenomenal acceptance on major issues but also encountered pathological apathy to some. There is an astonishing growth in women's education and their ambitions. There is no discipline which they have not accepted and are excelling in. Widow re-marriage is not very common but is accepted with little murmur wherever it takes place. Blissfully, young widows are no longer destitute, for, they are educated and they eke out a career for themselves. Child marriages are a thing of the past and gone completely out of the system. Kashmiri women are enfranchised since 1934. They are entitled to vote in the elections to the State Legislative Assembly, municipalities, panchayats and so on. They are vocal. They are positive :

On the flip side: wasteful expenditure has increased tremendously. An element of showmanship dominates the scene. In this mad display, marriages are more an exhibition of ostentation than a heartfelt wish to bless the couple with a life of love and contentment.

All in all, Kashyap Bandhu left a mark on the Kashmiri community. His fame as a social reformer spread all over India. He appeared fast like a comet on the reformist firmament of Kashmir, but, alas! was forgotten even faster by his community.

9 *Kashyap Bandhu As I Knew Him*

D. N. Parimoo, Ahmedabad

It was in 1929-30, a small group - Fraternity - was formed by a few of my friends including Shri Prem Nath Bazaz, Shri Mohan Kishen Tickoo, Shri Damodhar Bhat (Advocate), Shri Dina Nath Bazaz, General Secretary of Kashmiri Yuvak Sabha, Shri Dina Nath Hanjura, Shri Janki Nath Vishen, myself, and its Chief Organiser Shri Aftab Kaul Nizamat who can be very well said to be the founder of Female Education in Srinagar.

This fraternity had a zeal for certain reforms, and principles like early rising, taking long morning walks, vegetarianism, non-smoking besides directing its cumulative energy towards social reforms which were the need of the day.

All the members named above, excepting Shri Mohan Kishen Tickoo, ex-Minister and Chairman of Jammu & Kashmir Legislative Council, and myself, are no more living. We both are in 89th year of our life.

One fine day this group of the Fraternity found being addressed by a "Return of Native" bearing the name of Kashyap Bandhu. Soon after his addressing the members of the Fraternity it was revealed that this awe-inspiring and forceful personality was no less than a person of Geeroo village of Tral in Pulwama district, originally named Tara Chand with his Poet's title 'Bulbul'. He was looking no more a villager of Geeroo village where he had been a Patwari of Kashmir Revenue Department, but a robust personality, clad in Kurta, Swadeshi jacket, Dhoti all of Khadhar with a thick stick in his right hand, bare-headed unlike a common Kashmiri Pandit of the yore. His main theme of the social reform movement was change of dress in our womenfolk who wore Pheran a long robe standing on both shoulders down to feet with no trousers or even underwear. The head dress was white bandage Tarang with a number of turns round the head over Zooj, a sheet of white mulmul covering the head and extending to cover the neck overlapped by Pooch, a long white piece of white mulmul stretched down backwards over the Pheran. Sheikh Abdullah's Muslim Conference Movement in 1929 which opened the eyes of Kashmiri Pandit Community to the dangers of physical onslaught of Panditanis; their overall dress being vulnerable to induce foul actions by the invaders, caused the immediate need of drastic change in the dress of our womenfolk. So there was Bandhuji with his ready formula of a change of dress in our womenfolk from Pheran without underwear, which induced lethargy and procrastination, to Kurta and Shilwar or Dhotti with an underwear. The latter prompted the wearer to be more active and prepared to face any physical onslaught or attempt of molestation.

Kashyap Bandhu pioneered this movement of change in dress and that too not without stiff resistance from conservative Pandits as a whole. In this struggle of his for a change of dress, he was nicknamed as Kaesh Bandhooq which means a rifle filled with sawdust.

But he did not care a fig for this resistance and helped by the members of the fraternity mentioned in the beginning of this write-up, he carried on his campaign with all sincerity of purpose.

Stiff resistance from hard nut Pandits was met by the group meetings in different localities organised by the members of the fraternity. Propaganda in favour of change of dress was carried out by speeches from zealots of the fraternity besides by forceful speeches of Pt. Prem Nath Bazaz and Pt. Jia Lal Kilam an influential advocate who retired as judge of the J & K High Court. Hon'ble justice Kilam turned to be an influential social reformer of the community who even courted imprisonment when Roti agitation by the Kashmiri Pandits was launched against Maharaja Hari Singh's Government in 1930-31.

This movement for change of dress brought to fore some singing birds out of their nests. They would coin slogans and songs to support this movement of Kashyap Bandhu, affectionately known as Bandhuji. One of these singing birds and bards was Shri Dina Nath, a teacher in Govt. School under his pen name 'Dilgir'. I remember some lines of his outburst in favour of this change of dress which I reproduce as under

1. *Travee Pheran lo lo*
2. *Zooj, Pooch tye nariwar*
3. *Yim chhi Shikasik Sardar*
4. *Mala barhaiy gardaen*
5. *Travee Pheran lo lo*
6. *Pooch Pathkun Pakan*
7. *Walna Yiwana Zangan,*
8. *Chanda Sadkan doovan*
9. *Travee Pheran lo lo !*
10. *Tarang Chhuee akh khara*
11. *Kalas Peth bodh barah*
12. *Vank Panuk Soodh Kyah ?*
13. *Zethem ziuth lotah*
14. *Asan Janvaran*
15. *Travi Pheran lo lo*

1. *Give up Pheran, O dear*
2. *Zooj, Pooch and narizvar*
3. *These are agents of degradation*
4. *These have filled your neck with dirt*
5. *Give up Plieran, O dear*
6. *Pooch drags you backwards*
7. *It envelops your legs*
8. *The hanging pocket (attached to your Pheran) is sweeping roads*
9. *Give up Pheran, O dear*
10. *Your head wear tarang is as heavy as a ton*
11. *It is a great weight on your head*
12. *What is the use of long hair tail hanging through your back ?*
13. *It is a very long tail appended*
14. *Which is attached to animals*
15. *Give up Pheran, O dear !*

After meeting a major success in his mission for change of dress of our womenfolk, Kashyap Bandhu took to editing a weekly under the title of 'Sandesh'. Meeting some success in this endeavour he started a daily 'Martand' representing Kashmiri Pandits. It was a great success and for about a decade and a half 'Martand' turned to be one of the most effective dailies of the valley. Its voice got heard and Kashmiri Pandit was heard through it.

To keep 'Martand' alive and so also other social and political activities of Kashmiri Pandits, he organised Moachhi Phol enterprise. Moachhi Phol means a handful. Rice measuring a handful was supposed to be laid aside everyday by a Kashmiri Pandit family and after a week to be delivered in 'Martand' office at Sheetalnath by a Collector appointed by the 'Martand' office. This rice from whole of Srinagar Kashmiri Pandits was, sold to sustain the organisation partly.

When Sheikh Abdullah converted his Muslim Conference into National one, influenced by exhortations of Pt. Prem Nath Bazaz, Kashyap Bandhu was taken as one of the founder members. Later when Sheikh Abdullah became Prime Minister, he offered Kashyap Bandhu the post of Director of Urban Development.

I had personal contacts with Bandhuji and so had my friend Shri Mohan Kishen Tickoo. After a gap of three decades I incidentally met Bandhuji in his own village Geeroo where I was on a visit to a Basic school in the capacity of Chief Basic Education Officer, J & K. He heard about me and invited me to his home where I found him resting on a Kashmiri bed as a tired and sick man all alone without Smt. Bimlaji, his wife. Last I had the good fortune of meeting him with an embrace in 1982 in the office chamber of Shri Mohan Kishen Tickoo, the then Minister of Law and Forests in Sheikh Abdullah's Cabinet. Shri Tickoo, who had invited me from Bombay where I lived, to Kashmir, to be for a month with him as my friend and my host.

A pale and physical wreck Bandhuji entered the chamber of our common friend Shri Tickoo. Yet he looked happy, as according to him, he had consulted Dr. Ali Jan, the most popular doctor of the valley, who had assured him that he would live for some years more. He expressed this news to both of us with a glimmer of happiness on his face, This was the last time that I happened to embrace Bandhuji in our friends' ministerial chamber.

Very few know when and where he died as is the case with a lot of a number of great personalities, like Bandhuji, who die unknown, unsung, unwept and unheard.

10 Kashyap Bandhu

R. K. Bharati, Jammu

Kashyap Bandhu is the most revolutionary Kashmiri Pandit of the 20th century Kashmir. He was the first Kashmiri Pandit (KP) who pulled his community out of the sloth and terror of centuries heaped upon them by Muslim-Afghan barbaric rule for seven hundred years.

He was the first to introduce 'sari' among Kashmiri Pandit ladies in place of the traditional "pheran", tarangeh (head gear) loongi, and poots, which were proving too costly for the parents of the girls on their marriage. He used the good offices of the Begum Sheikh Abdullah and roamed from village to village with his austerity and "dhoti-prachar" campaign. The popular refrain of those days was :

***"Begum Jani hund taqreer booji tau,
Israf travi tau tee gatshi jaan."***

(Listen to Begum John's advice and abandon pomp and show and live a simple life)

Since Kashmiri Pandits are by nature progressive and they change with changing times without any resistance so they accepted his advice and the ladies began to wear sarees called "dhooti" in Kashmiri language.

The ladies would sing in marriage and other parties :

***Chui mubrarakh dhoti mahareniya / khasi veegis te taal thau naniye / Chui mubarakh
dhoti mahareniye.***

***(Congratulations o, bride with a saree / Go to marriage place with bare head, /
Congrats for your saree)***

It may be recalled that in those days women (and even men) would not bare their heads as it was taboo. Some took it as a welcome step to new age and others as a satire on 'dhoti-prachar' ; for instance they would sing :

***"Meethi paye bazres trav soneh pyalan / Kashyap Band Lalan kari israf" (The seeds of
'fenugreek' have fallen in the market / You go and collect them in cups / Kashyap
Bandhu dear has done away with pomp and show).***

Those who opposed Kashyap Bandhu called him "Kashi Bandoekh" (The husk gun).

Mr Kashyap Bandhu joined National Conference when it appeared in its secular incarnation from the erstwhile Muslim Conference. Mr Kashyap Bandhu remained close to Sheikh Abdullah who made him the Director for Rural Development (Dehat Sudhar) in his first cabinet. But soon Mr Kashyap Bandhu was disillusioned with National Conference and its communal agenda against KPs. It was the NC that deprived KPs of their landed property under a plausible name "Big Landed Establishment Abolition Act" which deceived the central leadership. They thought that it was their socialism in action which they had failed to implement in rest of India. This entire land without compensation or alternative rehabilitation. This started the exodus of KPs from the valley which was completed in 1990 and the valley was almost cleansed of the ethnic minority of KPs.

"Khatimai Jagirdari" was aimed at ousting Kashmiri speaking Dogra Rajputs living in Kashmir. This was to deprive them of the pension (in kind) sanctioned for their dead ones who had been killed in wars with General Zorawar Singh. This forced 10,000 (ten thousand) strong Rajputs to leave Kashmir in 1948. There were only 1500 (fifteen hundred) starving souls of this community left in Kashmir by 1976. There are still a few of such families in Kashmir as there are some KPs there but they live like bonded slaves. They cannot express themselves fully for fear of the gun and retaliation.

Kashyap Bandhu's real name was Tarachand and "Bulbul" (nightingale) was his pen name. He was a poet also. When he was disillusioned with the Sheikh, he began to isolate himself from him and then came 1953 and all NC workers including Kashyap Bandhu were side lined. Earlier he had shifted his attention from social reform to politics but now he abandoned this also and lived a lonely life in his

native village 'Giroo' (Geur in Kashmiri) in Tral area. The name of 'Giroo' was afterwards changed into "Noorpora" by Bakhshi Ghulam Mohamad the then Prime Minister of J&K.

Kashyap Bandhu attended his orchards in his village, Noorpora.

In 1970 Mir Qasim and his Congress (1) hatched another conspiracy to oust and impoverish the already impoverished community of KPs. Mr Qasim deprived the KPs of all their land even below the so called 'ceiling area'. The blind, the deaf, the dumb, the handicapped, the widows and the destitutes all had to surrender their agrarian land to their Muslim tenants who were by then very rich and most of them were on good posts in the administration also.

I started a campaign against this black law which was passed hastily in a specially convened session of the state Assembly.

When my articles, press reports, press conferences and protest demonstrations reached Mr Kashyap Bandhu he called me to his village. I and Pt. Triloki Nath Pandita of Kulgam went to him. He was now an old man and totally disillusioned. He had understood the underlying intentions of the "Agrarian Reforms Act of 1972" of Mir Qasim.

Under this Act no VIP, Patwari, IAS officer, Tehsildar, MLA, MP, Minister or Police officer lost his/her land. It were only the KPs (small land owners) who were made a landless class without compensation or any alternative rehabilitation. The resumption of one's own land was made so difficult that it was next to impossible to claim it or self cultivate it.

I had met Mrs Indira Gandhi the then Prime Minister of India dozens of times and she had understood the game plan but she found herself helpless before the Kashmir Government.

Mr. Kashyap Bandhu had become cripple by then. He said he could not move. His wife and children lived away from him. His sister-in-law was attending on him. If I am not wrong she was a widow perhaps. He could not move from his cot. He said he was a patient of diabetes. We spent a night with him. He said how he had worked in Arya Samaj for awakening of KPs in Kashmir. He was a writer also. He started "Desh" in Urdu and spread his message through its columns. He was also connected with rural development and had written much about it.

He advised us to be cautious as KPs did not accept any one as their leader. When I told him that I had no ambitions and that I was not even the ordinary member of the Zamindar Association or the "Rural Kashmiri Hindu Association" (RKHA) under which I was carrying on my campaign, he felt a bit reassured. However he advised me that even if I did not collect any money or donations still the KPs would call me corrupt. "He has bungled lakhs of rupees", he said would be talked about me. I was young those days and bubbling with enthusiasm but his sane warning note rang warning bells in my mind and I never went out with a receipt book and thank God no one has accused me of bunglings.

It is said that Mr Kashyap Bandhu had written his memoirs which faithfully exposed the communal policies of the Sheikh and his government but unfortunately Mr Kashyap Bandhu could not move freely for his ailment and therefore he entrusted this job to some of his trusted relatives. It is said that the said relative was not aware of the publishing business so he consulted a famous KP lawyer of Anantnag who took the manuscript and allegedly either destroyed it or hid it for his affiliation with the Sheikh family and the NC.

Thus a valuable treasure was lost for ever. But this is not confirmed and cannot be ascertained now.

Similarly another KP leader and a close associated of Kashyap Bandhu, Pt Rishi Dev, who gave all his life to NC and in return got very small benefits (as compared to his junior Muslim colleague) in the shape of professional training and appointment of his children; is now a disillusioned man at 80. He too has recorded his bitter experiences with the communal mentality of the NC leadership, the Kashmir Congress etc, the state bureaucracy and the government and also the ignorance (conscious or unconscious) of the Central government. For paucity of funds he has not been able to publish it. I tried my best with a few publishers but they demanded very high costs and therefore the book could not be published and the truth remained hidden within the pages of the manuscript.

Kashyap Bandhu was well versed with Sanskrit. He recited a Sanskrit sloka to us and showed what subtle erotic depth it had: The meaning of the couplet was: "What a strange fire there is in women / If it is away it burns / And if it is close (in a hug) it soothes".

He had published his poems in Persian script in small booklet form as was the fashion those days. In his early youth he had been a Patwari and had worked in many villages. He had thus known life from close quarters and sang it in his poems. He too had loved and been loved, though the expression of love was not as open then as it is now.

His were the times when leaders and rulers had some morals and cherished values besides lust for money. The leaders had not degenerated to the level of present leaders and therefore Kashyap Bandhu was a very sad man at the fag end of his life. He foresaw that KPs could not live in the valley. He told us that we should try to get our children settled outside. However he never dreamt of militancy and local support to them. He believed in Kashmiryat which was eroded systematically by the ruling oligarchy and the bureaucracy after 1947. He was sore that communal virus was injected into the body politic of Kashmir. Acting on his advice I left Kashmir in 1978 leaving all my property behind. I have not even got myself registered as "migrant" in Jammu as it needs big money to grease the palms of some officials which I did not do because I too belong to an age when we thought we should maintain some standards. Though I realise now that we have failed and the unethical people have won the game.

On the advice of Kashyap Bandhu Pt. Triloki Nath Pandita and I visited almost every village from Manazgam in Kulgam to Shadipora via Sonwar in Kashmir impressing upon the KP brethren that the so called Agrarian Reforms and communal policy in promotions and appointments was a conspiracy under secular garb to force KPs out of the valley. Although KPs agreed in principle but none visualised the real danger; so they were caught unawares in 1990 and many got killed and almost all were deprived of their home and hearth.

Perhaps Kashyap Bandhu could guide this dispersed 'migrant' community at present but there is none who can match this great soul and every KP has to fend for himself and carve out his / her way according to his / her own lights.

11 Kashyap Bandhu: An Assessment

D. N. Kaul, New Delhi

The scene is a sunny afternoon in mid-thirties of the last century. Venue: the compound in front and on the southern side of the Raghunath Mandir, situated midway between the Hubba Kadal and Fateh Kadal bridges on the left bank of the Jhelum. About a thousand Kashmiri Pandits are assembled in the temple compound, men and women of all ages, in their traditional dresses of 'Pherans'. On the stone platform, nearly ten feet high, surrounding the temple sanctuary which has the effigies of Ram, Lakshman and Sita, ornately clothed, are a small wooden table with a few chairs surrounding it. The small door on the southern boundary wall of the temple suddenly opens and all eyes are turned towards it. The tattle in the crowd stops and a hush supervenes. Every one whispers-Bandhuji; as a tall, rather swarthy, burly man steps in. He has a stout built, is bespectacled, wearing a dhoti and a white kurta. On his left shoulder is a light coloured shawl, flung with a deliberate insouciant air for special effect. His hair is black, shiny and oiled, with an odd lock extending on to his high marmoreal brow. For, Kashyap Bandhu knew the tricks of the trade - viz. how to impress an innocent gathering with a Netaji look and aplomb which he had acquired in a three decade association with the pre-independence Punjab Arya Samaj and Congress leadership. When he got up to speak, the accompanying camarilla raised slogans of Bandhuji to which the eager and expectant crowd responded with 'Zindabad'.

Bandhuji began his speech by drawing a picture of a durbar in Emperor Shah jehan's court in the early 17th century. Dr. Barton - the British doctor who had treated the emperor's daughter - was described as in attendance. The speaker then, in chaste Urdu, of which he had a mastery, spoke of how the doctor solicited a foothold for the East India Company trading rather than a reward for himself for the services he had rendered. The speaker highlighted an average Britisher's patriotism as compared to the Indian's lack of it. He soon diverted to the need of reform among the Kashmiri Pandits, in dress, thinking, social mores and what have you.

The scene drawn above is from my memory for I was present in the gathering. Bandhuji used to hold such meetings, more or less Mohalla-wise in all parts of Srinagar, including the bowels of the midtown such as Babapora, Chinkral Mohalla, Rainawari, Gankhan and so on. His dress, typical of an Indian Neta, modelled after the great Deshbandhu C. R. Das and Subhash Bose, had an electrifying effect on the then comparatively unsophisticated Kashmiri minds. His new approach had a revolutionary effect in the thinking and the conduct of Kashmiri Pandits, who lived, steeped in abject conservatism, backwardness and a fetid social mileu which needed a breath of fresh air. Who else could provide it except a Kashmiri Pandit who had sprung from the soil and had got marinated in the revolutionary and reformist company of pre-partition Punjab which boasted of figures like Lajpat Rai, Dr. Kitchlew, Dr. Satypal, Khusal Chand Khursand and others. Punjab's atmosphere was surcharged with a new life which conditioned and moulded young Tara Chand who hailed from a typical peasant family from a sequestered and unknown village-Giroo-of the Awantipora area. As per his own conversations with me during a radio discussion in Srinagar, he said he served for a few years as a Shajra-Kash in the revenue department, a lowly job. Even in those days he used to attempt short doggerel rhymes in Kashmiri, satirising the revenue officeriat. Subsequently, in Lahore he acquired mastery over the Urdu language and especially its use in journalism which he practised in editing 'Martand'.

Kashyap Bandhu began his reforms of the Kashmiri Pandit life and thinking by propagating vigorously for a change of dress among women. He used to exhort crowds to abandon the Pheran which symbolised Muslim conservatism and had originated in the long and cruel Muslim rule of Kashmir. The Pheran is obviously a derivative from the Persian flowing garment called the 'Parahan'. In fact, even the English Apron belongs to the same family. The adoption of this formless, loose garment was necessitated by the Muslim culture's insistence on covering the curvaceous parts of a woman's anatomy. The head dress consisted of a 'taranga', a long strip of white cloth folded to a

two inch width, which was tightly wound around a skull cap called the Kalposh - again a Persian word meaning a head covering. This was again designed to ensure that the locks of a woman - normally an object of beauty are completely hidden from view. Even the plait of hair which hung at the back was hidden behind a 'Pooch' - a piece of muslin starched and shaped like a snake - a concession to the Naga culture which prevailed in pre-historic Kashmir. It is obvious that this mediaeval dress suppressed a woman's physical personality and consequently her thinking and fostered backwardness and conservatism. Very appropriately Kashyap Bandhu lashed out against it and succeeded by dint of his oratory, active propaganda and writings.

This approach led to reforms in the dowry system and foolish rituals which characterised marriages and other social events. A system of holding Sunday congregations at Hari Parbat in the sprawling lawns at the foothills of the Chakreshwar shrine was started. I had occasion as a youngman to attend some of these. A choral song had been composed for these gatherings and its burden ran as under:

***"Naw hai aye zindagi,
Dye hai diye taar,
Sharika war, Sharika war".***

Translation :

***"A new life is pulsating in us.
we are confident God will see us through".***

Kashyap Bandhu's other great achievement was the founding and nurturing of the Martand which became the official organ of the K. P. Sabha. Here again he drew from his experience of having edited the Arya Gazette at Lahore. He commanded wonderful journals in Urdu and wrote satires on the Government of the day. This column bore the heading "Chalant" - meaning a non-serious passing comment. He used to draw generously from old Kashmiri parables and apply them to contemporary situations. One of these was "Than - than Gopal" which means an empty vessel making a false noise.

Kashyap Bandhu strayed into politics in association with Premnath Bazaz, Jialal Kilam and others and even went to jail. He finally joined the National Conference and became quite a favourite of Sheikh Abdullah who appointed him as the Director of Panchayats in the emergency administration. Bandhuji accepted no salary and toured the valley extensively. He used to talk to the peasants in their own idiom - having risen from the same stock. He propagated the cultivation of willows on all river and nullah bunds to solve the firewood problem of the city.

After a hectic social, political and administrative life Bandhuji retired into the shelter of the Warikoo house situated in Karannagar. Here he used to meet some old friends and wrote Urdu poetry. He had adopted "bulbul" as his "name-de-plume" or "takhalus".

We lived near the Warikoo house. So my late elder brother who was an Urdu scholar and I used to visit Bandhuji on a Sunday morning and discuss diverse topics with him. One of his poems was entitled "Vasiyat" or the will. I still remember a verse from it:

***"Bulbul na yeh Wasiyat Ahab bhul jayen
Ganga ke badle meray Jehlum mein phool jayen"***

***"Bulbul, my friends should not brush
aside this wish of mine.
My ashes should be consigned,
not to the Ganga, but to the Jehlum".***

This shows his passionate love of Kashmir which he had chosen to serve as is evident even from the name he adopted.

His study was confined to Urdu books and those too not of the classic variety. He had practical wisdom and horse sense and mastery over speech and writing. Kashmiri Pandits as a community can never forget his services at a crucial juncture in their history. He brought about a revolutionary

changes in their dress and thinking. He came as a whirl wind of change in to a festering miasma and altered it. Few others, if at all, can boast of such achievements.

Someone asked Bal Gangadhar Tilak what he would do if India attained freedom in his lifetime. He said he would repair to his village and resume teaching young boys. In like manner, after a full and crowded life spanning more than a quarter of a century, Kashyap Bandhu went back to his old place of birth, Giroo, where he lived his halcyon days of ripe old age. I learn he used to talk to peasants who would foregather in his parlour in the rural house. What dreams and thoughts assailed this restless, self-made man in his solitary, sequestered life can be surmised only, for he never attempted a personal memoir.

12 Kashmir - Kashmiriyat - Kashyap Bandhu

Dr. Rajiv Kumar, Jammu

Kashyap Bandhu ji has been the only multifaceted personality of our times. Much has been written about him as a journalist par excellence. He has been described as the tallest social reformer of the Pandit community. He was head and shoulders above others in the political leadership arena, and above all he was a rural development visionary.

Very little has been written of him as a Kashmiri, whose heart and soul were deeply entrenched in the soil of Kashmir. He suffered because of this attachment both domestically as well as politically but his heart would bleed even at the thought of leaving Kashmir even temporarily. He was a rebel by temperament, and therefore had the courage to pen down while in Quetta in late twenties:

***Bulbul Na Yeh Wasiyat Ahab Bool Jayen
Ganga ke badle Mere Jehlum Mein Phool Jayen.***

He had wished it so, that if he would die outside the valley, his ashes should be carried back to the valley for immersion in the Jehlum. Although Ganges is revered more by the Hindus for their last rites, he had categorically willed that Jehlum was to be given preference over the Ganges, and that is what was done when he breathed his last in December 1985. He was actually named Tara Chand. Bulbul was his Takhalus but he was renamed Kashyap Bandhu brother of Kashmiri people by Vishwa Bandhu - Principal of Vrjanand Ashram, Lahore.

In early sixties he was working upon Rural Development Project for conversion of Saniwari (the low lands) into Sonawari (The gold yielding lands). His flood control and plantation work (Alas! all the millions of willows have been engulfed in the fire of AZADI) was being highlighted at the national level. A very high level team had landed at Sumbal from Delhi escorted by Late Sh. D. P. Dhar. Things were being discussed about undertaking such projects in other parts of the country. Boodhan Tehrik and Vinoba Bhave's mission was being discussed. One of the gentlemen enquired of Bandhuji as to what would he like to do after completion of the Sonawari Project. Pat came the reply:

"I will go and rest under my Chinar at Gairoo". And that is what he exactly did. Even though all the members of the large joint family left the ancestral house in one connection or the other, he continued to stay there only - an alone in the big house till he breathed his last. I was the youngest in the family and had the privilege of living with him for a very long time but finally I too, left but he would not. One day when I approached him with a suggestion that I would like to acquire a plot of land at Srinagar he called for my mother and wanted to enquire if I was a truly hereditary descendant of the family.

While I was growing under his tutelage he would ensure that I would get all the necessary inputs needed by a true Kashmiri child. In my village school he ensured that I be taught Persian along with Urdu. He would be immensely pleased when I would recite "Karima Bi-Bakshai Bar Haal-e-maa; Ki Hastam Aseer-e-Kamande Hawa". Consequently I was the only Pandit boy in the Urdu class of Sh. Mushtaq Sahib at D.A.V. School Srinagar. Bandhuji's idea behind teaching me Urdu and Persian was to finally make me read and write Kashmiri. Although he was an Arya Samaji by conviction he would always encourage me to visit the local temple in the morning and the Asthan of Sheikh Hyder Sahib in the evenings. He would always be glad when my mother would cook yellow rice and take it to the Asthan for distribution among children there.

I would be made to get up very early in the morning to learn my lessons. Soon after that Peer Mubarak Shah's voice would be heard through the loud speakers of the local mosque calling the devotees for the Namaz. I had learned the whole azan by heart. One day he came to know of it, sent for the peer and asked him to hear me reciting the same and to correct me if I was doing it wrongly.

Visitors would pour into the house regularly at all hours to meet him - both our own villagers as well as from distant places. I was made to get the Hookah for both Pandit as well as Muslim visitors. I

had to get the water changed and chillum going to the satisfaction of the smoker. Once another respected villager Sh. Akram Bhat complained that it was not proper for me to do all these errands. Pat came the reply: "How else is he going to learn that he has to respect Rasool Dar as well as Govind Koul at par. This is the crux of our Kashmiri traditions and culture."

Bandhuji was tremendously loyal not only to the Kashmir motherland; its culture - the Kashmiriat but also to the political cause. When Sheikh Abdullah was dismissed and arrested in 1953, Kashyap Bandhu was also incarcerated and kept in Kathua Jail for a number of years. He did not join hands with Bakshi Ghulam Mohamad in spite of being cajoled because of Sheikh Abdullah's and Mirza Afzal Beg's continued incarceration. In 1975 when Sheikh Abdullah concluded the "Beg - Parthasarthi" accord and wrote to Bandhuji to tighten his belt for service to the public (I remember, the letter said Zonar bandi Kijeye - Quam Ki Khidmat Ka waqt aa gaya hai) Bandhuji flatly refused saying that the Sher-i-Kashmir whom Bandhuji knew was not to be seen after this accord. Therefore he had no intention of working with him again under the terms and conditions of this accord.

But alas! today not only has this great son of Kashmir been forgotten, he has been betrayed. His ancestral house wherein he breathed his last with none but Ama Sheikh by his bedside has been razed to ground. No evidence has been left behind to indicate that a four storey house ever existed there. The orchard which he raised over about 80 kanals of land has been cleared of trees. The clay is being dug out to construct new houses in the village. The Chinar under which he used to rest stands lonely, with its roots exposed. Gairoo Noorpora has lost the privilege of being the proud museum of the memorials of a great son and the people living there would better remember that such opportunities knock the door but once in a life time.

Blessed be the Bandhuji for having made us feel proud of being Kashmiris.

Cursed are we who could not live upto your expectations.

[The thirteenth death anniversary of Pt. Kashyap Bandhu falls on 18.12.1998]

13 Memorial Presented by the Sanatan Dharam Youngmen's Association on behalf of Kashmiri Pandits to His Highness The Maharaja Bahadur of Jammu and Kashmir on 24th October, 1931.

May it please Your Highness,

We, representatives of Kashmiri Pandits, beg to submit below our community's demands for Your Highness' consideration. Our community's loyalty to Your Highness' house is well-trying. Our devotion to Your Highness' person and throne needs no reiteration. Our hopes have been centred in Your Highness ever since Your Highness' assumption of the office of Senior Member of the late State Council. Your Highness' liberalism and solicitude for the people have found expression in several reforms which must for ever enshrine Your Highness in our hearts. Encouraged by all this, and with a view to assisting Your Highness' Government, we venture to avail the opportunity which has been so graciously granted to us for placing our demands before Your Highness:

1. Recent events have unmistakably proved the machinery of the administration in the State to be unsound and totally unfit for purposes of modern government. The Srinagar Riots Enquiry Committee has not gone into the matter at any length but even its findings corroborate our statement. Nepotism and jobbery are still at work in the selection of men for higher posts in the State. If in the time of his late Highness, outsiders were given responsible posts to the exclusion of local men, the tendency in more recent years has been to put men (local in many cases) irrespective of merit or qualifications in charge of such posts. We stand by the principle of preference for "State-subjects" and do not desire any change in the definition of the term. But we are opposed to a system under which the posts of a Governor of a Province and the Inspector-General of Police can be given to mediocre men wanting, as has been found by the Riots Enquiry Committee, in executive efficiency. Merely communal or even national considerations should not weigh in selecting men for posts of the highest responsibility. We would not exclude even Englishmen and Lent officers from such posts, should circumstances make their appointment necessary. For obvious reasons, we must rule out such Englishmen and Lent officers as have been directly connected with the Government during the last ten years. The appointment of really capable men at the helm will obviate the necessity of making too frequent changes in the administration and improve its general tone. But more than that the policy of drift will give way to purposeful government. The irresolute methods of administration should end. The Government has of late become top-heavy, and indiscriminate expenditure has contributed to the unsatisfactory state of our finances. This combined with laxity in the control of audit and accounts, makes the Government grope after make-shifts. Recent orders of penny-wise and pound-foolish retrenchments, which have mainly affected our community, should be withdrawn. Retrenchment should, in the first instance, aim at stepping wasteful expenditure and begin with highly paid services.

2. The Government should make adequate arrangements for the protection of law-abiding citizens, their homes and their places of worship against unprovoked attacks, loot, arson and incendiarism. No well-wisher of the Government can contemplate with equanimity the utter bankruptcy to which the administration of law and order in the State was reduced recently. We are not for a rule by ordinance, such as became necessary last month simply because the ordinary law was not set in motion. But the Government should never fail to discharge the primary functions of government. In the Muffasils the position of our community is perilous, and special measures of protection are necessary. The Government should deal with the situation with sympathy and understanding and make it possible for us to breathe freely. Fire-arms should be granted to those Kashmiri Pandits who can reasonably apprehend danger to their life and property.

3. The wrong suffered by our community in the recent riots need not be mentioned here. But Vichamags should be made impossible for all time. Your Highness' illustrious grandfather, Maharaja Ranbir Singh, granted three lakhs of rupees as compensation to the Shias, who were looted in his time

by the Sunnis. Your Highness has already been gracious enough to declare that the question of granting compensation to Hindu sufferers of recent riots is engaging Your Highness' attention. This grant of relief is, therefore, not one of our demands today. But we cannot help observing that these sufferers have not so far received that attention from the authorities that their case deserved. We take this opportunity of informing Your Highness that there is a wide-spread impression in our community, that we are doomed to suffering because we may not make such noise as must compel attention. If law and order are to be vindicated, it is the Kashmiri Pandits who must suffer Lathi charges, if retrenchments are to be made, it is the Kashmiri Pandits who must be victimised before others, if a favourite is to be pitchforked into high office, it must be over the head of some Kashmiri Pandit. It is again Kashmiri Pandit officers who can be turned out from service with impunity without reason. And a Kashmiri Pandit official's worth may be recognised on all hands, and yet he may be condemned to an inglorious career taking orders from those whom he should command. No one can say that we as a community suffer from the disease of impatience. One can easily imagine what would have followed if any other community's place of worship had been set on fire, as our temples have been set on fire, even after the airmesty. We do hope that Your Highness' Government will demonstrate in practice that whatever might have been the case so far, no discrimination against us will be allowed in future in any sphere whatsoever.

4. Consistent with our culture and the tradition of our community both here and outside the State, we cannot look on things through communal glasses. It was the proud boast of the great Pandit Moti Lal Nehru that his mind could not run in communal channels. This sums up, we believe, the position of the average Kashmir Pandit on communal matters. Long before the Musalmans of Kashmir had become politically conscious, it was Kashmiri Pandits who fought for modernity in the administration. It was they who first raised the cry of Kashmir for Kashmiris. It was they who first demanded a legislature, a free press and a free platform. They cannot today go back on their nationalism, and repudiate these and other essentials of good government. Recently they have not been so vocal on political reform, but the reason is that the Musalmans have presented their claims avowedly on communal grounds and for communal ends. Kashmiri Pandits are as anxious as any other community for the introduction of constitutional government, but they are equally anxious that the body politic should not be corrupted by the canker of communalism. Even that greatest votary of liberty, Mahatma Gandhi, was once so upset with the communalism of the Indian Press as to say, that if he had the power of an autocrat, he would proscribe all papers in India with the exception of his own "Young India". In India today one provincial Legislature and several Municipalities have become arenas for communal fire-brands, a state of affairs which is by no means enviable. We should rather do without a free press and a free platform and the right of representation than make our country a hot-bed of communal warfare. Recently events in Kashmir are a tragic demonstration of the evils of communalism. Free press and platform or no press and platform, the Government can at no time deal too strongly with those who preach hatred among different classes of people. We are opposed to giving statutory recognition to the vicious principle of communal representation. The constitution of a legislature in accordance with the stage of our political evolution, its powers and functions, the franchise and other matters are things of detail which cannot be decided without a regular and open enquiry. We reserve to ourselves the right of making concrete proposals on all such matters at the proper time.

5. One matter which has driven our community to the verge of despair is our economic position. It was proved by our spokesmen before the Riots Enquiry Committee, that about a thousand of our educated men - Matriculates, Undergraduates, B.A.'s., B.Sc.'s., M.A.'s., M.Sc.'s., I.F.S.'s. and L.L.B.'s - are without service. The number of such youngmen in all other communities put together cannot be more than 200. In recent years about a hundred Kashmiri Pandit educated men have settled outside the State, including such distant places as Italy and England. The Government has in the past on numerous occasions passed over the claims of our qualified men, and given preference to men of indifferent worth from other communities. The Riots Enquiry Committee has observed that qualified

men from among Mohammedans are not available, although, paradoxically enough, it states that they have a "legitimate grievance" in that they are not represented in service in large numbers. The truth, however, is that Kashmiri Pandits have the grievance that their Graduates must give way before Matriculates of other communities. The Committee again states that Muslims were never excluded from service because they were Muslims. It could be correctly said that Muslims have been taken in, service because they are Muslims, and it was in the humour of despair that many Kashmiri Pandit young men expressed their preparedness some time ago to embrace Islam when applications for certain posts were invited from Muslims alone. The glaring truth is that Kashmiri Pandits are being excluded from service because they are Kashmiri Pandits.

We have said above that the most responsible offices in the State should be given to the best available men, not excluding Englishmen and Lent officers, but we cannot help observing that Kashmiri Pandits have not even been considered for those high posts which have been recently or are even now in the hands of State-Subjects belonging to different other communities in the State. Even Sir Albion Bannerjee, whose oft-quoted statement has been exploited so successfully to our detriment, could not help remarking that Kashmiri Pandits are a "depressed class". It will be admitted by all that a community, whose political importance in the past history of Kashmir is unquestionable, and which has given to India her best politicians, is not receiving its due in its own home. Our fault is that without any special facilities we received higher education, beating the other communities in the race. Although our population is small, 60 to 75 per cent of those in the State who have received or are receiving higher education belong to our community. With this inherent sin of being Kashmiri Pandits, we cannot expect to get even petty clerkships, which we are told, must be conferred not on grounds of efficiency but on grounds of communalism. Without other resources to draw upon, Kashmiri Pandits have been left wondering how to keep body and soul together, During recent years, this vicious policy of making appointments on conununal grounds, has operated against our interests alone. And unless a miracle happens in this age - notorious for its absence of miracles-there is absolutely no hope for our younger generation, which believes in the dignity of labour, to earn honest livelihood in the State. We do not want to tire Your Highness by giving examples, but the appendices IV, IV (a), V and V (a) of the Statement presented to the Riots Enquiry Committee, a copy of which is herewith submitted, which could be supplemented by similar statements relating to other non Muslim communities, will speak for themselves. We, however, wish to point out the case of a Kashmiri Pandit First Class First M.A. in English who was refused the post of a lecturer in English in the Prince of Wales college, which was conferred on a Second Class Mohammedan M.A. in Philosophy, a thing which would not be possible in any college outside Kashmir. The same gentleman was on a previous occasion passed over to make room for a Third Class Mohanunaden M.A. in English. Several others of our First Class M.A.'s have been treated in a similar manner. Such things must be stopped at once. Our community will feel reassured by Your Highness' issuing orders that all such preferences must become a thing of the past. We also pray to Your Highness to be pleased to publicly announce that our community will not any more be placed under any disability in the matter of employment, in the State. We respectfully beg to submit that in such matters quibbling formulas do not at all serve any useful purpose. We do not claim any special rights. We do not ask for preference in any matter on the ground that we are a minority. We want fair field and no favour in the matter of grant of service.

6. There can be no reason for the exclusion of Kashmiri Pandits from the Army. Even at present, Kashmiri Pandits hold high military ranks in British India and several States. We do not want to refer to old times, but the history of Kashmir during the times of the Afghans and the Sikhs furnishes examples of epic courage displayed by scions of Kashmiri Pandits held high command and distinguished themselves in various battles against the Afghans. In several battles in the State, Kashmiri Pandits fought and scored victories. Skardu and Muzaffarabad were once conquered by a Kashmiri Pandit, Ganesh Pandit Dar. They played an important part in the conquest of the frontiers and their consolidation. How Kashmiri Pandits helped not only in the creation but also in the

building of the State needs no detailed description. But for the supreme sacrifice and courage of Pandit Birbal Dar and Mirza Pandit Dar, the history of Kashmir might have been differently written. It is therefore not at all unreasonable to expect that the doors of military service will be thrown open to our community in the very near future.

7. The problem of providing employment for the unemployed is greater than that of removing the disability which has been put on our community. The question of mass unemployment can be solved by the State and the State alone. It is the duty of the State to provide a living wage for every adult male willing to work. More than, the best interests of the State lie in this that educated men are not given cause for disaffection against the administration. It is notorious that discontented B.A.'s feed revolutionary forces. When we say this, Your Highness, we are pointing out a danger which we shudder to contemplate and which all well wishers of the State should be anxious to avert. It is not for us to suggest a scheme for the relief of unemployment, but a country with the natural wealth and physical advantages of Kashmir, must provide employment not for one thousand but for thousands of educated men.

The Government has not so far shown a real appreciation of the problem. Both the sympathy and efficiency so necessary for the solution of this problem have been wanting. This calls for change. As many Kashmiri Pandit families as possible should be encouraged to take to agriculture by liberal grants of land. All the existing restrictions in the sale, mortgage and transfer of agricultural land in favour of Kashmiri Pandits should be removed. Special scholarships have been granted to all the communities other than Kashmiri Pandits for general education. On the same principle special facilities should be provided for Kashmiri Pandits to encourage them in the fields of agriculture, industry, arts and craftsmanship. The only community in the State which is not classed as backward is our community, obviously because we are the most educated and our occupation has mainly been, owing to circumstances which are the creation of history, Government service. For these reasons, however, we are economically worse off than other communities. We also claim to be a "backward community" so far as really productive professions are concerned. To give us encouragement in such spheres, special facilities are necessary. But even these measures will not mitigate unemployment in our community to any appreciable extent. The removal of the present disabilities under which our educated men have been put is essential, but even that will not remove the difficulty. A brisk industrial programme without further loss of time is urgently needed.

8. In the end we beg to submit that for a settlement of the constitutional issues arising from the demands submitted by different communities, a joint Free Conference of officials and non-official representatives of the communities is necessary. All communities should be given equal opportunity to present their case. We regret to have to submit that during the past, important decisions detrimental to our interests, have been taken by the Government behind our back. The Conference, we are proposing, will examine the outstanding issues in all aspects and also take into account all pertinent matters including the future of Indian States in general as finally evolved at the Round Table conference, the peculiar strategic position of the State, and the existing state of affairs obtaining in different States, and the existing state of affairs obtaining in different States.

To sum up, our community's demands are:

(a) The machinery of administration in the State should be remodelled to serve the purposes of modern government. Jobbery and nepotism should be ended. Positions of the highest responsibility should be given to men of tried worth, Indians or Englishmen. The efficiency of administration should be maintained at the highest standard. A resolute Government is our first demand.

(b) Proper arrangement should be made for the protection of law abiding citizens, their property, their homes and their places of worship against attacks, loot, arson and incendiarism. Kashmiri Pandits should be provided with fire-arms, where necessary. Special arrangements should be made for the protection of Kashmiri Pandits in the Muffasils.

(c) We are for the principle of a fair field for all and favour for any. All discrimination against our community should be stopped. The practice of passing over the claims of highly qualified Kashmiri Pandits and giving preferences to men of indifferent merit belonging to other communities should become a thing of the past. The recommendation for giving preference to Mohammedan Matriculates over Hindu Graduates should be repudiated. As all other communities have been given special facilities to induce them to take to literary pursuits, our community should be provided with similar facilities for agriculture, commerce and industry.

(d) The problem of educated unemployment should be seriously tackled not only in the interests of our community but also in the interests of the State. Recent orders of penny-wise and poundfoolish retrenchment which have mainly affected our community, should be withdrawn. Retrenchment should, in the first instance, aim at stopping wasteful expenditure and begin with highly paid services. As many Kashmiri Pandit families as possible should be encouraged to take to agriculture. All restrictions on the sale, mortgage and transfer of agriculture land in favour of Kashmiri Pandits should be removed. A brisk industrial programme should be launched forth at once.

(e) Communalism should not be introduced in the body politic in any form. No statutory recognition should be given to communal majorities and minorities.

(f) The Military Department should be thrown open to Kashmiri Pandits.

(g) Subject to the above conditions, our community is for the establishment of a system of government on constitutional lines. We are for a legislature which is free from all taint of communalism. We, however, reserve to ourselves the right of making concrete proposals on constitutional reform at the proper time. We are for free press and free platform, but licence must be mercilessly put down. In our opinion the Government can at no time deal too strongly with those who preach hatred between different classes of Your Highness' subjects.

(h) To deal with all constitutional issues arising from the demands of various communities and to recommend a scheme of reforms, a joint Free Conference should be instituted which will take into account the future of Indian States in general, the peculiar strategic position of Kashmir, and the existing condition of affairs in different Indian States. Equal opportunity should be provided to all communities to present their points of view.

We beg to remain,

Srinagar,

Your Highness'

24th Oct., 1931.

Most loyal and obedient subjects

1. Pt. JIA LAL KILAM, B.A., L.L.B.

Vakil High Court & Municipal Commissioner.

2. Pt. JANARDHAN TENG, M.A., L.L.B. Vakil
High Court.

3. Pt. PREM NATH BAZAZ, B.A.

President, Sanatan Dharm Youngmen's Asscn.

4. Pt. KASHYAP BANDHU, Vidhya Vachaspati.

5. Pt. DAMODHAR BHAT, B.A.

Secretary, Sanatan Dharm Youngmen's Asscn.

14 Memorable Letter to Kashmir sabha Calcutta from Late Respected Kashyap Bandhuji Whilst on Death-Bed

Gairoo. (Noorpora)
Dec. 18, 1985.

My dear Dr. Moza,

God bless you. I received your both letters one in the ending days of November and the other in the 1st week of December, I am on bed for 10 days and have asked my cousin to help me to take the composition of this letter. I regret I cannot accomplish the article you need within the time that you have prescribed. The reasons are as under :

On receiving your first letter I thought that in the 1st week of Dec. I shall complete my contribution and you will get it in the last week of Dec. But God willed otherwise; on 27th Nov. some friends from Srinagar visited me at my village. They requested me to go down to Srinagar on 1st of Dec. for a few hours and return by the evening. The task was pressing and I could not say "No". As on 1st Dec. they had called to Srinagar all their delegates from villages and towns and it was their request that I should address these delegates. I agreed and on 1st Dec. those friends came to my village and carried me to Srinagar. The place where they had arranged the Samelan is a newly-built building by Dharmarth and is known as "Ranbeer Bhavan". Its Hall is very grand and commodious, equipped with all necessary arrangements but unfortunately no heating arrangements are available there nor even Engthee or Kangree. I had to sit in this hall, speak to a large gathering for about two hours and these good people never thought that a man 87 years of age, needs something to warm himself. God bless them. They are all in their young age and possibly forgot that an old man in this Dec. needs something to keep himself warm besides his warm aprons. In the evening at 6 clock I returned to my house by a car and found myself shivering and indisposed.

In Oct. '85 some friends came to me with their assignment to be helped in their works. The assignment was "All those Kashmiri Pandits young and old who took leading part in those forgotten bitter communal days when Kashmir was invaded by outsiders under the instructions of British government be annihilated, and wanted to do away with Hindu rule of Kashmir." These were black days when every Kashmiri Pandit was supposed to be younger brother of Maharaja Hari Singh and any slap, any stick or any stone was a stick or a stone directed to Maharaja; when administration was completely broken and communalism was rampant and ringing through the streets of Kashmir, all day and night. It was something God's grace and the determination of those young men who, as if with their heads in their palms, were in the streets to help themselves and their community. Possibly there might be 5% of those young brave sons of Kashmir living now in their old age like me and the rest have vanished possibly to convey to their-forefathers in heaven, the story of 1931.

These friends contacted me on 22nd Dec. It was rather shabby and insolent to tell these friends that I was not fit, because this date was fixed two months earlier. I got up and remained. I requested them to come to this place again on 10th Dec. but I was flat on my bed with fever, cough and cold. I am still in that condition. Today my doctor, an efficient man, told me that I should go down to Srinagar for complete check up, possibly my heart is involved. My friend, when I write you these lines I feel ashamed but you can understand my plight.

There are some young men, thousands of miles away from their natieland, living in Calcutta who want to know the paper MARTAND that jumped into that communal, simmering fire cauldron that Kashmir was in and how this great paper became one of the strong instruments to extinguish this fire. It is a shame for me that when these young men approach me with the request that I should throw some light on that episode, I say that I am ill or that I was ill and could not write anything about it. My friend, God knows how I feel really sorry that I am completely unable to send my contribution by the time you need it. My old age is a barrier for it and I am suffering so seriously that my doctor

advised me to move to hospital for check up. My dear Doctor I have not the privilege of knowing you personally but as a spokesman of those friends of Calcutta kindly communicate my difficulty.

I solemnly promise that as soon as I am well I will send my contribution whenever you will command, provided I am still in this world.

With my blessings and prayers for the long lives of you all.

My greetings to you all.

I am livingly yours,

Sd/-

Kashyap Bandhu

[Reproduced from Vitasta Annual Number : Vol XXI, 1985 - Martand Number]

15 Why I Left National Conference

Kashyap Bandhu

[Courtesy: *Kashmir Sentinel* Nov. 16-30, 1998]

[Late Kashyap Bandhu whose actual name was Pt Tara Chand Koiil has remained a legendary figure in Kashmir politics. As a person who influenced the major social and political trends of his times, Bandhu ji has few equals. When the communal aggression of 1931 hit Pandits in Kashmir, Bandhu ji abandoned his role as an Arya Samajist in Lahore and returned to Kashmir to give a new direction to his community and the politics of Kashmir. Bandhu ji was a man of renaissance. He helped Yuvak Sabha-the political platform of Kashmiri Pandits to give a complete break to the socially decadent and feudalistic politics of the earlier leadership. A great social reformer, an institution builder, a pioneering journalist, Kashyap Bandhu was a man of many parts. He along with Justice Jia Lal Kilam and Pt Shiv Narain Fotedar formed the all time great triumvirate of Pandit leadership. He was a mass leader in true sense, who combined the role of a mainstream leader and a Pandit leader effectively. Bandhu ji abhorred the politics of sycophancy. His pleadings to Pandits in joining National Conference were motivated by the consideration that it would create compulsions for secularisation of Muslim politics. When he found that the Muslim leadership under Sheikh Abdullah was insincere in breaking away from religion based politics, he resigned from the National Conference, A few months after it, another leading Pandit of the times, Pandit Prem Nath Bazaaz followed suit over National Conference attempts to communalise the script issue. We are thankful to Bandhu ji's colleague Sh. SN Gorkha for providing us the text of Bandhu ji's various write-ups from the old files of 'Desh (pre-1947) and to Prof KN Pandita who collated the same from Urdu to English. -Editor]

In 1934, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah issued a statement to the press. It showed his inclination towards nationalism. In the context of 'nationalism', we met several times in Kashmir and in Jammu and considered our future course of action. Sheikh Sahib was of the opinion that we should nationalise Muslim conference as well as Yuvak Sabha. I thought this was not right and that we should give up both the organisations and go in for a new Organisation but Sheikh Sahib believed that MC should be transformed into National Conference.

As far as the question of nationalising the Yuvak Sabha was concerned I did not consult any colleague or a friend. My inner voice said that it was an organisation of a minority community. Much may a minority like to pursue the line of nationalism, unless the majority demonstrated tendency towards nationalism, the concept would not meet with any success in this country. My conscience did not permit me to nationalise the Yuvak Sabha. It was the refuge of a minority and God alone knew what difficulties would raise their head in the event of nationalising it.

If the Yuvak Sabha collapsed, its revival would be very difficult. Those to whom this Sabha belonged had not given me the right (authority) to make it an experimental ground. I disclosed my inner feelings to Sheikh Sahib. Therefore, very silently, I separated myself from Yuvak Sabha. At that time I said in unambiguous terms that I wanted to take a long jump. I said I had either overgrown to a size that I cannot be accommodated in Yuvak Sabha or that the Sabha had degenerated to the extent that it cannot accommodate me. Thereafter I waited in silence for the day when Sheikh Sahib would announce nationalisation of the Muslim Conference. I waited for the day to translate our dreams into action.

There is poverty and unemployment rampant in my country. These painful realities of the country could not be mitigated by Hindu or Muslim communalism. Only nationalism could deliver the country from these disasters. In order to get hold of this nationalism, I severed my relations with the Sabha for whose construction, I had spent six precious years of my life. In order to achieve nationalism, I severed my relations with the newspaper for whose strengthening and consolidating I had worked with my sweat and blood. To achieve nationalism, I did not only estrange hundreds of my friends, but also disappointed thousands of my dedicated cadres. When I found that nationalism

was beckoning me, I responded to it like a mad man. It was precisely what the Persian poet Hafiz had said as

***asman bar-i amanat natawanist kashid
qur-a-c fal be nam-e-man-e divana (Zadand).***

("The spheres could not carry the burden of trust; it was I, the mad man, who was earmarked for the job")

Whatever little sacrifice I could make in the first union with this beloved, I made. It was not out of pride that I did it; not out of obliging anybody, but as a gift to my new found love. Today, I am separating from the shelter where we had put up the throne of the Goddess we believed was a force to banish poverty, penury and unemployment from the motherland.

When we were set free from the prison houses, and began to work for National Conference, I felt that venerable Sheikh Sahib wanted to come to the destination of nationalism through the path of religion. He is our great leader, and I acknowledge it with all sincerity. But he also wants to be come the chief of the community (Amir-e-Millat). The desire of becoming the chief of the community will, unfortunately negate nationalism. In the circles of our friends it is widely said that whosoever joins the nationalist fold will have to give up his religion. But this is only to stir up emotions. Certainly Sheikh Sahib will bear me out that whenever we happened to stay together after the formation of National Conference, I would awake him from sleep saying that it was the time to make namaz (prayers). While he offered namaz, I proceeded with my sandhya (Prayer). However, it is true that I considered "religious rhetoric a poison when exuded from a political platform."

Religion and nationalism are two separate things. Despite many good qualities in religions, we have to agree that different religions have not only estranged people from one another, but have also been instrumental in shedding the blood of many innocent persons. You cannot bring the people of different faiths together in the name of religion. But as against it, you can unite people with different faiths as well as atheists and non-conformists under the banner of nationalism. This is so because the agenda of nationalism, is the agenda of eradication of. unemployment, disease, and poverty . People, irrespective of religion and faith, are afflicted by these plights. Religion is related to your soul and to your God. If the Islamic namaz brings you peace of mind, you may as well perform the namaz as many times a day as stipulated. If your soul finds peace in Hindu dharma, you may spend your day in prayers of your choice. If you feel satisfied and comfortable with atheism, you may as well accept it.

Nationalism does not at all stop you from becoming a true Musalman, or a true Hindu or a true atheist. But if you want to add religious appendage to nationalism it means massacre of nationalism, trampling down its very spirit. When we go to mosques and temples, we should go as Muslims or as Hindus, and tell the gathering good things about religion which might bring them individual or social good. But when we mount the platform of National Conference we are neither Hindus nor Muslims, but citizens of a nation. We must talk to people about the national issues. Why to bring in the battles of Bader or of Mahabharata? Is there dearth of Maulavis, Mullahs and Brahmins in this country so that we also become a Maulavi or a Brahmin on the platform of National Conference. If we are to become Maulavi and Brahman, then we already have Yuvak Sabha and Muslim Conference. What was the need of floating National Conference?

I am conscious that nationalism is at present in its early stage in this country. I am also conscious that the Muslim brethren in this land are educationally backward and the religion has predominance in their lives. We may commit mistakes. But I also know that nationalism can take roots in this land when effort is made towards it. But this cannot be done on the basis of "error on principle". Are we to circumvent this idea for the whole of our lives?

I made several requests to Sheikh Sahib to give proper lead to this country. If our religious rhetoric continued even on the platform of National Conference. then we would be lost. My expectations did not come true. If at any time, I raised my finger towards religion while using the platform, Sheikh

Sahib suppressed it. Not only that, we gave more religious doses to the masses. What were the consequences?

When NC was formed, we decided to adopt the flag of Indian National Congress. We unfurled this flag at our branch offices and other functions. We were to hold a session of NC in Anantnag which had to be preceded by a session of the working committee which was scheduled to draw the programme of Anantnag conference. All the Pandit members of the working committee were unanimous that the flag of the NC should be the tri-colour of Congress. When the issue of flag came up in the session, Chowdhury Abbas Khan said that if the Congress flag was to be the flag of NC, the Jammu Muslims would be annoyed. Sheikh Sahib heard it and tilted towards the opinion of Abbas Khan. I said that this was not a sound logic. I said if Kashmiri Hindus tell us that we had raised the slogan of 'inqulab Zindabad', would that mean that we should give up that slogan. Nobody was prepared to listen to me. All the members turned to Sheikh Abdullah. Only one member supported me. A majority vote decided in favour of the 'plough flag'. I felt belittled. In the Anantnag conference, religious rhetoric was made full use of. Shri Girdhari Lal Anand, former member of the working committee protested against this in the press.

He even wrote to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. The only result was that Shri Anand lost the membership in the working committee. He was replaced by Sardar Mohinder Singh who did not attend even a single meeting owing to his other preoccupations.

Communal posturing became acute. At that time two papers were brought out in this state, namely Khalid and the Mirror. The former was issued from Mujahid Manzil and the latter from Hamdard office. The Khalid reflected Muslim communal politics while the Mirror, reflected Hindu communal politics. The man behind Khalid is Maulana Mohammed Saeed Masudi who also happens to be the General Secretary of National Conference. Behind the Mirror is Pandit Prem Nath Bazaz, a member of the NC working committee.

When we ascend the nationalist platform, we tell the world that we are free from Hindu-Muslim communalism, But when we return to private place, we add fuel to communal flames and become editors-in absentia of communal newspapers. All this is happening before the very nose of Sheikh Sahib. If the General Secretary of NC and member of the working committee fan the flames of communalism in a manner they are doing, how then can nationalism grow in this country? All these happenings took place prior to my resigning from NC.

Apart from this communal duel, there are other reasons as well related to constitution and such like matters. As I have said, our experiment with nationalism in this country is in the early stage. Our activists can commit mistakes and if our hearts are clean then mistakes can be rectified. Last year, there ensued lengthy correspondence between me and the general secretary with regard to these mistakes. I was understanding that the conference was committing mistakes. Likewise the general secretary and the president may be thinking that I was committing mistakes. Who is wrong and who is right could be decided by the working committee only. I repeatedly wrote to the general secretary to convene a meeting of the working committee and place the entire correspondence before it. He did not pay attention to these requests. A session of working committee was held in Mirpur also in routine. But there again, the general secretary did not place this correspondence before the WC. I hope he will not deny this. But if he denies, then I am prepared to release this entire correspondence to the press.

15.1 Auqaf Committee

After converting Muslim conference into NC, Sheikh Sahib constituted the Auqaf Committee, himself becoming its chairman. The general secretary of the Auqaf committee became the secretary of Auqaf Committee. I had implored Sheikh Abdullah to hand over this committee to other Muslims. I said there were 16 lakh Muslims in the state and did he think there was not a single true Musalman among them who could be the chairman of Auqaf and would run it? I told him that it did not behave the president of NC to be a political leader as well as a religious leader at one and the

same time. I said it was necessary to hand over the presidentship of Auqaf to some body else because the Hindus in Kashmir were also opposing nationalists. Auqaf committee would become a den of intrigues and cause for tension. Sheikh Sahib said as this : "The government has given these mosques to me"! I said these were not given to your person. These have been given to you and in your capacity as the president of Muslim Conference. Now that you are the president of NC you should hand over the Auqaf Committee to some honest and religion abiding Musalman. At the best you can ask this committee to show you the monthly account of income and expenditure which can give you an idea: how the affairs of Auqaf are being conducted.

Sheikh Sahib was not prepared to accept what I said. I cannot accept the proposition that there is not a single person except Sheikh Sahib among lakhs of Muslim who can run the affairs of the Auqaf. If Sheikh Sahib or anybody else thinks so they want to arrest the intellectual growth of Muslims. If only those one dozen people are there to run the NC and the Auqaf, then the demand for responsible government is only a fiction.

Gradually it dawned upon me that Sheikh Sahib did not want to be only the leader of the nation (Qaid-e-Millat), but also the religious leader of the community. Obviously, I told him, it meant that by associating himself with National Conference, he apprehended that the Muslims would not be prepared to follow him. Sheikh Sahib was thus afraid of mob-fury. Thus he thought that there was only one way of carrying the people with him and that was through religion. But, I said, religious injection from nationalist platform was tantamount to poison.

May 28: NC working Committee's statement carried an incomplete sentence which I reproduce below.

"Respected Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. In connection with Nehru Sahib's visit to Kashmir, a meeting of the prominent leaders of NC was called in Mujahid Manzil on May 28 to nominate a reception committee. At the outset of the meeting, Pandit Kashyap Bandhu asked the President of NC Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah with whose permission had he invited Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru to visit Kashmir. Some more matters were also brought under discussion not connected with the reception. This generated a heated discussion and the matter ended there".

The general secretary made a mention of "some more matters" and stopped with that. He did not disclose the contents of those matters which had made Sheikh Abdullah utter "I am first a Muslim and last a Muslim". There were some matters like this which compelled me to resign. I would like to make a mention of these.

Last winter, I stayed back in my village for almost four months while Sheikh Sahib proceeded towards Hindustan. On his return, he thought it necessary to activate the people. Conditions were created by some of his colleagues with communal mentality under which Muslim League activists had ventured to capture Mujahid Manzil. He therefore, galvanised the Auqaf Committee into action. The president of National Conference cast aside the "nationalist" garb and assumed the attire of the commander of the community (Amor-e-Millat). He began delivering speeches in each locality. In one of those speeches, he said, Islam is the sun, and the rest of the religions are only stars. It means that as with the rising sun, all stars fade away, similarly with the rise of Islam, all other religious will fade away. If this kind of sermonising is done by the Mir Wair, or Hamadani Sahib, or some other Musahnan, I shall have no objection. But if the president of National Conference makes such utterances, what then shall be the fate of nationalism in this country.

A Hindu friend sent me a copy of this statement when I was in my village, I was sad. After this, and probably on May 25, I received a letter from Pandit Jiyalal Kilam informing me that Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru was to visit Kashmir and that I should rush to Srinagar. On May 26, I was in Srinagar. I received information from the general secretary that a meeting was proposed to be held on May 28 at Mujahid Manzil in connection with the visit of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru in which I should participate. Pandit Sahib (Nehru) was scheduled to arrive on May 30 now, imagine that I was a member of the Working committee and in the evening of May 26, I was told that Nehru Sahib was

arriving on May 30 in Srinagar. On the evening of May 28, I arrived in Mujahid Manzil and I inquired of the general secretary whether Nehru was visiting Kashmir as the guest of NC or as the guest of Sheikh Sahib? The general secretary understood me and parried an answer for more than half an hour. On my insistence, he finally came out. "Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru is coming to Kashmir as the guest of Sheikh Sahib". This answer put a seal on all questions, I had in my mind.

A short while later, a meeting of ordinary workers of NC was held in the compound of Mujahid Manzil. In this meeting a question was asked from Sheikh Sahib whether Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru was visiting as the guest of NC or as his guest. Sheikh Sahib said that he (Nehru) was the guest of NC. This contradicted what the general secretary had said earlier to me. I did not think it proper to ask more questions from Sheikh Sahib in a public meeting like that.

The public meeting was followed by our closed door meeting attended by nearly 30 prominent Hindu and Muslim comrades. I give below the text of the questions and answers between myself and Sheikh Sahib in this meeting.

I (KB) : Sheikh Sahib, you say that Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru is visiting as the guest of NC. With whose permission has he been invited?

SMA : What do you precisely mean?

KB : Have you consulted the Working Committee and did it permit you to extend the invitation? Visit of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru to Kashmir is not an ordinary event. There are dozens of political implications involved.

SMA : You are putting hurdles in the way.

KB : NC is a democratic organisation and we want democracy to prevail here.

SMA (in English) : I want to hang your democracy.

KB (in English) : And I want to hang your dictatorship.

SMA (in English): If you don't like dictatorship, you can leave this place.

In deference to the orders of the Hon'ble President I left the room. Some Hindu and Muslim colleagues also came out with me. A row ensued outside the room. I wanted to go home but these members did not permit me to go. This stalemate continued for about half an hour. Mr. Shadad manipulated things in a way that I had to go back into the room. Back in the room the President said that he was sorry for the words he had said, and I accepted it.

Then my question why the Working Committee had not been consulted came up again. If the government prevented Pandit Nehru from coming or if those opposed to NC or Congress staged demonstration in protest, what was to be done. Questions like these surfaced. Then at this point, I told Sheikh Abdullah that he was creating difficulties for the NC by his attitude. I precisely said." You are riding two horses. You have made the Auqaf Committee a base for propaganda.

Maulana Muhammad Saeed Sahib is the General Secretary of NC. But he is the incognito editor of Khalid. Mr. Prem Nath Bazaz is the incognito editor of the Mirror. You are in know of all this and yet you are silent. These antics will not bring the people closer to nationalism but in fact distance them from it. People are criticising nationalism without justification. But by our action we shall be providing them the convincing argument." I told Sheikh Sahib that he had no right to draw comparison between Islam and the rest of the religions on public platforms : "you had no right to call Islam as the sun and other religions as the stars."

He replied, "you must remember that I am a Musalman first and a Musalman last". I invited the attention of the people present to these words of Sheikh Sahib. Pandit Jiyalal Kilam told Sheikh Sahib that he should not have uttered those words. You should have said that you are a Musalman as well as a nationalist. The Sheikh asked 'why then are you a nationalist?'

SMA : 'Because the Holy Quran directs me to become a nationalist.' I send curses to that nationalism which the Holy Quran doesn't permit.

After hearing this explanation of 'first a Musalman and last a Musalman' theory from Sheikh Sahib, I chose to remain silent I could now understand Sheikh Sahib's religious rhetoric over last one year and half. I also realised that my nationalism cannot be religion based nationalism.

In the presence of all the members there, I told Sheikh Sahib that I could no more continue to repose trust in National Conference because there was difference of principle between your nationalism and my nationalism; you want nationalism of "first-Musalman and last Musalman". But I stick to the principle of "first Indian and last Indian." I worship this principle whose interpretation is based on the prevailing hunger, destitution and unemployment of the masses.

At about midnight, I returned from Mujahid Manzil. I was a man lost to myself. I felt like a man who had just awoken from a horrifying dream and who was still in a state of trauma owing to the darkness of the room in which he stood.

The meeting resumed in the Mujahid Manzil next day. There was no attraction left for me. To me this meeting was no different from the type of meeting that used to be convened at the time of Muslim League, or like a meeting at Sheetal Nath in which some communal issue was being discussed.

The same day at about four o'clock in the afternoon, I handed over my letter of resignation to a friend of mine in NC which reached the general secretary on the following day.

Now, I am here with my hunger, destitution and unemployment-stricken nationalism. And in this quagmire are bogged down the people of this country irrespective of their religion, community and caste.

16 Memorial Presented to the Prime Minister of Jammu and Kashmir

Kashyap Bandhu

[This article is taken from "Freedom Movement in Kashmir"]

The Honourable Prime Minister,
His Highness' Government,
Jammu and Kashmir, Jammu.

Sir,

May I venture to take the liberty of addressing this communication to you on the present position of the Kashmiri Pandit community in Kashmir. Recent events have had a most detrimental effect on the economic and political and consequently the social security of the community. In order to have a proper comprehension of the situation in which the community unfortunately finds itself placed today, I deem it necessary to outline briefly the historical background from which it has sprung and the influences which have moulded its genius as also the circumstances which today conspire to strangle that genius. If the community is to be rescued from the doom, which, if the present circumstances remain unchecked and unremedied, is inevitable, it is necessary to put into practice the suggestions made at the conclusion of the representation. These suggestions do not comprise any extravagant demand; they are only a claim on behalf of the community to be allowed reasonable facilities to continue its existence in a manner consistent with its past history and present achievements.

Kashmiri Brahmins have during the last two thousand years and more held a very high position in the intellectual life of India and not of India only; for Chinese historical records mention Kashmiri Brahmin missionaries propagating Buddhism in China in the early centuries of the Christian era. Their literature and their works of art, which still are some of the finest in the world, bear testimony to their greatness. Though today in the State they are considered an unwarlike race, in the medieval times, more than once they swept out of their mountain fastnesses and extended their sway over vast regions in India and Central Asia. Mahmood of Ghazni who spread devastation in North India was unable to penetrate into Kashmir, and Kashmir still retained its independence for two centuries after Mussalmans had established their empire throughout the length and breadth of India. Muslim domination in Kashmir, when it occurred, was not due to an invasion from outside but was the result of infiltration and conversions from within. But all through the vicissitudes of centuries, the Kashmiri Brahmin community who was the flower of the population retained its individuality and notwithstanding untold hardships, kept its flag flying. Throughout these centuries, whatever the circumstances and whoever the rulers, the Kashmiri Pandit community had a potent voice in the administration and determination of the destinies of their country. As late as century ago it was on the initiative and with the active cooperation of the Kashmiri Pandit community that Maharaja Ranjit Singh occupied Kashmir.

Since then, as ever before, this community has rendered loyal and devoted service to the rulers of the land. On account of their special hereditary pitude they have taken the maximum advantage of the educational facilities afforded by Government to all communities alike, and this community, so far as male literacy is concerned, is one of the most advanced in the world, as the proportion of literacy among men is practically cent per cent. When anskrit gave place to Persian we adopted the latter language as our own, so much so that our culture is now as much Persian as Sanskritic. When Persian gave place to English we took to the new language with the same avidity and filled the new administrative departments as we had done the old, rendering, more often than not, for a bare pittance, the same singlehearted service to Government that our ancestors had done before. We preferred the long hours and the meagre emoluments which are the lot of subordinate functionaries in public offices to more lucrative employment because by doing so we followed the bent of our minds,

as for countless generations, penmanship has been our hereditary craft and public service our hereditary occupation. There is not a single department of the administration except the Army from which we have been debarred (though there is no such bar in the British Indian Army who contains several Kashmiri Pandits holding the King's Commission) which does not owe its reputation, such as it possesses, for efficiency primarily to the Kashmiri Pandit element in it. From the frozen heights of Ladakh to the malaria-infested valleys of Muzafferabad, whatever progress has been achieved in whatever branch of the administration, be it road construction, detection of crime, spread of education, provision of medical aid, the Kashmiri Pandit had had a dominant share in its achievement though being usually in a subordinate position, the only reward he has reaped for his incessant toil and hardship has been an occasional smile and a chit from his officer.

But today in spite of all the services he has rendered and all the privations he has endured, he finds himself faced with a situation which threatens him and his children with political and economic extinction. Not only are the Kashmir Pandits deprived of their occupation of which they enjoyed almost a monopoly even under the worst of Pathan rulers, but very frequently they are also being deprived of opportunities, which, in bare justice, those who are actually in service are entitled to claim as a matter of inalienable right. It is not denied that with the change of circumstances, communities and nations have to readjust themselves, but we urge it emphatically that it is absolutely unjust to force the pace of reorientation of the entire cultural and economic outlook of a whole community, and still more unjust to destroy the vested interests and the principal means of livelihood of a distinguished and talented race with a stroke of the pen, and without giving it time to readjust itself with the changing times. It cannot be denied, and it were, there are facts to prove the futility of the denial, that whatever the name given to the so-called re-organisation of State administration, call it the Efficiency Commission or Committee the result is always the same; the axe falls on the head of the Kashmiri Pandit. The whole philosophy of the remodelling of the administration can be summed up in the sentence "Whoever is in the Kashmiri Pandit must be out". Denied the privileges of the majority on account of the smallness of our numbers, we are at the same time denied the protection due to a minority and doubly due to a minority community with our history, services and educational attainments. We recognise the necessity of the reorientation of our outlook and we are aware of the difficulties which Government have to face under the stress of existing circumstances, but at the same time we insist that Government have a definite obligation to discharge in relation to us and it would be height of injustice if that obligation is ignored and we are thrown over board. Instances are not wanting where other Governments placed in a similar situation have acted in a fundamentally different spirit and with a sympathy worthy of admiration. Take the case of Anglo-Indian community in India, which is much smaller in number than ours and incomparably smaller when the population of the whole of India is taken into consideration. This community during the last 150 years has occupied a very privileged Position in the British Indian Services. The security of this position is now threatened by the urgent demand for Indianization. Throughout the discussion on Indian Constitutional Reform, the representatives of the Anglo-Indian community have urged that their present members in services should remain intact at least for 30 years, during which period they will be able to adjust themselves to changed circumstances and to adopt other avocations. It is understood from the papers published a couple of weeks ago, that the British Government have in fact given a pledge that in the new constitutional changes safeguards would be devised for the economic security of the Anglo-Indian community in India. Surely the claims of the Kashmiri Pandit community in the Jammu and Kashmir State are not less than those of the Anglo-Indian community in British India, and their case stands in the need of at least equally sympathetic consideration. After all an answer must be provided to the question : 'What are the Kashmiri Pandits to do?' They are deprived of their hereditary occupation; Difficulties are placed in their being recognised as an agricultural community which could enable them to buy land and settle down to agriculture. No special facilities are given to them in obtaining technical education and no encouragement provided in pursuing commercial enterprise. Even if such facilities had been given, it would have taken many years before proper adjustment could take place,

for the entire mental landscape of a community cannot be effected and re-arranged in a day. How much longer will it take without any facilities being given?

By virtue of their religion and of the common interests as also by reason of their deep and abiding sense of loyalty Kashmiri Pandits are identified with Government by the opponents of Government. Kashmiri Pandits are proud of this, but such an identification has serious drawbacks and under certain conditions, for example every time a clash occurs between the rising tide of education and communalism on the one side and Government on the other, the Kashmiri Pandits are the first target for attacks, as in the eyes of Muslim agitators, injury to a Kashmiri Pandit whether in the service of the Government or not of whatever sex or age, is identical with injury to Government. Government, being an intangible thing and not easily susceptible of being overthrown, the first objective of any outburst of agitation in Kashmir is the destruction of the Kashmiri Pandits' property and sometimes of life. We do not mention this by way of accusation or complaint, but only as a statement of fact in support of our contention that if we are attacked on one side we are entitled to being defended and strengthened by the other on whose account we are attacked. We should not be ground to powder between the upper mill stone of the Government Retrenchment or Efficiency Commissions and the policy of exclusion from public service and lower mill stone of communal attack on our life and property by unbridled subversive agitation. Our natural hereditary attitude, our religious obligations, our sense of duty, no less than our self interest demand that while peacefully living with other communities we should maintain steadfast loyalty towards our ruler and his Government. But it has to be recognised that we, as a community must live and have a distinct and honourable standing compatible with our history and our attainments, and not as pariahs and strangers within the State existing on the difference of other people. The time has come when as a community we have come to a decision and chalk out a policy to prevent our extinction and what is worse than extinction, our degradation which is progressing apace on account of the terrible unemployment prevailing amongst us. It must be remembered that unemployment in a community like ours is a gangrene of much worse type than in other communities because all our young men are well-educated. If they cannot turn their hands to useful things their potentiality for mischief is far greater than in the case of young men of any other mischief community. I do not wish to be considered hysterical on the subject but the tragedy enacted before our eyes is so deep and so all prevailing that it is impossible to measure the extent of devastation already committed. Our demands are not extravagant. We want a guarantee for security in services in the same manner as the British overnment are giving to Anglo-Indians and the domicile Europeans in India, though our claims for such guarantees are far higher than those of these communities as the Anglo-Indians and domiciled Europeans come into existence only a century and a half ago at the earliest and we have been living in this country for thousands of years and the monuments which dot the countryside everywhere bear witness to our honourable existence.

Recognising that, in the altered conditions we will eventually, have to adopt other avocations, we want that special facilities be given to us here and now, so that the community may pass through the period of transition without the much jolting of its framework. Some of our demands are:

- (1) Recognition of the Kashmiri Pandit community as an agricultural community without any disability in the sale and purchase of land in every part of the State.
- (2) Special facilities in technical education by grant of special scholarships in the State and foreign technical institutions.
- (3) Special facilities in the grant of Government Contracts especially in the P.W.D. and Civil Supplies where our contractors are handicapped in the interest of non-state subject,
- (4) Financial aid from the Dharamarth Department to start industries on the security of immovable property without interest or at least a low rate of interest. Such aid has been granted before to certain persons of other communities.
- (5) In order that our interest might be adequately represented in the proposed Assembly, at least two Kashmiri Pandit Councillors should be nominated. This is the mere necessity as in the new franchise

proposal the number of Kashmiri Hindus (Pandits) is 3 out of 75 in place of 4 out of 63 as proposed by Mr. Galancy.

Maintenance of the strength of the Kashmiri Pandit representation in the services for a period of 30 years at the figure at which it stood on 13th July 1931, on which date the present Campaign agitation was openly started. As stated above the Kashmiri Pandits are the community which suffered the most on account of the retrenchments that have since taken place, because for one reason or the other the Departments where Kashmiri Pandits are either not employed or are employed in small numbers, for instance the Military Department and Minister-in-Waitings Department, have not been very much affected by retrenchments. Curiously enough, even in these Departments, when retrenchment has been made, Kashmiri Pandits have principally suffered. This demand is exactly what the Anglo-Indians are asking in British India and as it is understood are hoping to secure.

(7) There is no reason why Kashmiri Pandits should be debarred from entering into State Army, when they are given King's Commission in the British Army.

(8) If the Efficiency Commission is to be kept at all it is essential that it should contain a Kashmiri Pandit member and its procedure should be revised in such a manner that the persons affected should be given an opportunity to explain their cases before action is taken against them. This is a matter of general public interest.

(9) (a) Special measures should be taken to protect our religious places. What at present happens is that whenever the mood takes them, irresponsible Muslim agitators come and place a few stones in the compound or in the vicinity of our shrines and raise a Hullabaloo that the land is "Wakaf" and they will erect a mosque. The Government when approached by us instead of warding them off appoint an Arbitration Committee to settle the dispute, though actually there is no dispute, as the land has been in the possession of Hindus for centuries. The local authorities instead of nipping the trouble in the bud take no action until the agitation takes root and the excitement amongst people attains a high pitch.

(b) Restoration of Hindi to its former position in schools and colleges.

(10) The following measures are immediately necessary for safeguarding the interest of Kashmiri Pandits actually in service at the present moment:

(a) Kashmiri Pandits should not be prevented from promotion when they are due to them according to seniority and efficiency.

(b) They should be raised to higher positions as even according to Mr. Galancy, the proportion of the Kashmiri Pandits in the Gazetted staff is not adequate.

(c) The Headquarters of the Government should be moved as before from Srinagar to Jammu and vice-versa. Its fixation at particular place is administratively unsound, financially useless, and in fact no real saving is made.

(d) Measures should be taken to check the propaganda in the Muslim press against Hindu officers in general and Kashmiri Pandit officers, who are specially marked for such attention, in particular.

(11) We have been asking for representation in the State council and we hope that His Highness will graciously be pleased to grant our request.

(12) Grant of area for plantation to the Kashmiri Pandit and waste lands.

We are sanguine that these requests will receive sympathetic consideration, as our memorial in 1931, The exact words of his gracious declaration are shall always continue to take a deep personal interest in all that concerns the welfare of the Kashmiri Pandit community which, though small in numbers, is the best educated community in the State and comprises the original inhabitants of the country who have maintained their time-honoured traditions". We take our stand on this.

I beg to remain, Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

Kashyap Bandhu

March 1934.

17 A Kashmiri Editor

Kashyap Bandhu

[Courtesy: Desh Files procured from Sh. S. N. Gorkha, Translated from Urdu by Prof. M. L. Koul.]

In the continent of Europe, journalism is known as 'fourth estate'. In India, journalism plays a leadership role. In Kashmir, journalism can be interchangeably deployed for unemployment.

Here we have a few journalists who are virtually God-made. But there are hosts of journalists who have adopted the profession under the pressure of circumstances. All these are outnumbered by journalists who assume the appellation for 'court advertisements'.

It is well-known that there is a mighty gulf and rivalry between goddess of learning (Saraswati) and Goddess of wealth. The twain never meet. The Goddess of learning flies in the face of the Goddess of wealth. So does the Goddess of wealth fly in the face of Saraswati. But in Kashmir, majority of journalists traverse the path of wealth to reach the abode of Goddess of learning. In this arduous journey they find their saviours in 'court-clerks'.

Here some people hold that there is little difference between journalism and groceries. It needs four hundred rupees to setup a grocer's shop. For journalism some paper sheets are a requirement. If tired of selling groceries, he can be doled out the suggestion of issuing out a paper and in a jiffy he emerges as a journalist and feels it as an essential passport to success.

In our country there are herds of employees like patwaries, revenue clerks and others who on their own appoint 'helpers' to assist them in the performance of their duties. All of them draw their pay dues from the public exchequer. But, in actuality, their official work is performed by the 'helpers'. In journalism we find a class of 'helpers' who are quite knowledgeable and write most of the columns in the papers. But the front page flaunts the name of the journalist in bold letters. It is an interesting aspect of journalism in our country.

In communal battles journalism assumes a sharper edge than a fast-flying bullet. In reality, communal shop sparkles through the idiom of journalism. Goods find an increased demand and the number of customers touches a new high. There is a corresponding increase in the lustre of journalism when communal fires blaze and sparkle.

There is a regular spectacle of 'give and take' between communalism and journalism. The twain have the same nexus as body and soul I ave. In the existence of one lies sustenance of the other. If one dies, the other meets an immediate death. Both carry or feel of it and that is why both are inter-related. Both are of the same hue and mode. Journalism flourishes under government patronage, not under the patronage of people. It always tries to flatter and appease the powers that be and ignores its own essential ingredients and codes.

God-made journalists also can be seen in the same ranks. They also follow the same track that is furrowed by their prime movers. They are adrift in the same waters, but have an earnest desire to march ahead of others.

It is hoped that the 'lyres' of present day journalism will get deflated when governments withdraw their patronage. As a result its wheels will get sunk and stuck up. It will be bereft of its own inner dynamism. This condition may prove fruitful for resurgence of real journalism in our country. It is a mere hope and world lives by hope only.

18 *A Kashmiri Pandit*

Kashyap Bandhu

[Reproduced from - [Kashmir Sentinel](#), Oct. 16-31, 1998]

[Late Kashyap Bandhu was not only a foremost reformer and a pioneer journalist, he was also a great humourist-satirist. In 1940 in his weekly 'Desh' he drew caricatures of such collective personalities Kashmiri Pandits, Kashmiri Peasants, Kashmiri Traders, Kashmiri Leaders, Kashmir Gost, Kashmiri editors etc. While drawing these 'QALMI CHEHRE', Bandhuji said, our approach is corrective and reformative and not critical or sadistic." We are thankful to Mr. Shamboo Nath Gurkha, the veteran journalist who worked in 'Desh' with Bandhu Jee, for providing us these old writings and Dr. K. N. Pandita for translating these from Urdu to English. -**Editor**]

If Kashmir is a Junk house, Pandit is the master-piece of its show-room. He is more ancient than its archeological antiques. Gradually he is becoming the archeological remain of this country. Longevity of age suggests that his physical evolution has come to a standstill. His limbs and body are shrinking day by day.

Many physicians and faith healers have made prescriptions for his metamorphosis. He did make use of some of these prescriptions. But his prescription for metamorphosis could not become as effective as that of Madan Mohan Malviya. These days also one prescription for metamorphosis is under use with him.

18.1 *Mental State*

This much briefly about his physical state. As regards his mental state, his horizons are wide and plain. He has never fixed any religious hurdle in this. Therefore anybody can traverse it without any hindrance. In his mental horizons, from one way marches Mahatma Gandhi with his goat and from the other way marches Stalin with his red legions. Alongside this you will find Hitler holding the hand of Mussolini, and also Roosevelt and Churchill strolling. The Bhikshus of Buddha and their Viharas are also found along these path ways along with the Churches of Jesus, the hospices of prophet Mohammed and also the temples of Lord Krishna.

This segment of Kashmiri Pandit is very fertile but only clerically. Turnips are grown on it as yet which nobody in the market is prepared by buy for a pence even. But time is not far away when Kashmiri Pandit will grow cash crops in his fertile Valley with the help of new implements and tools.

18.2 *About his heart*

Comparing the expanse of his brain with his heart, we find a different picture. The latter is nothing more than a narrow lane. At one end of his narrow lane sits Mano Maharaj and on the other end the clerical mentality with a broken pen in its hand. In this age of motor vehicles and railways the need is to widen the lane of the heart, but owing to non-availability of experienced engineers this project cannot be put into action.

18.3 *Political and Religious state*

After examining his physical, mental and spiritual state, let us examine his political and religious status. His mental expanse has elevated his politics high so that the narrowness of his heart does not overpower his politics. If there were no religious percentages in India, if there were no question of religious minority and majority and with that the resurrection of Kashmir with minority-majority syndrome had not come up, he would not think in terms of being in a minority in this country and has begun to think of practical politics in the context of majority of this country. Therefore his present political development begins with government biscuits and ends in minority mixture. But this is only the passing phase of his politics. He has a special place in the political landscape of this country which no other person in this country can fill.

As regards his faith, he is a victim of external and internal conflict. He wants to give up his conservation but cannot. He is free by birth from mental superficialities, but at the same time is their prisoner also. His religious and social life is dominated by his better-half, but in terms of mental and spiritual framework, she is widely different from her husband. In order to stay put his household management, the poor fellow has surrendered his brain to his wife who sometimes gives his skull a strong jolt. This puts him on the horns of a dilemma. Sometimes, therefore, his social life is a bit (insipid). Some of his hobbies are interesting. He is a fan of roganjosh which he consumes during the day and to counter it reads Kalyan at night. On beholding the suffering of beasts and insects, the Brahmin in him is moved. Rice may be very costly, he will carry two or three hundred grams with him while visiting HariParbat in the morning to throw it to ants and insects. He is moved by the suffering of insects, but not by the privations of a widowed daughter or daughter-in-law in his house. He has been interested in the moving stars and heavenly bodies. He listens raptly to their influence on him and his future with as much curiosity as those waiting for Derby horse race lottery. He strongly believes in the impact of stars. He holds on to conventions and his daughters' marriage eats up his earning in full. It has impact on his Brahmanism which gives him immense pleasure.

In short, he is an interesting being in the garden of Kashmir. The garden has no lustre without him. In his long life he has seen many cataclysms which he braved and emerged more reinforced. After storms we heard him sing.

There are many more ages to come, be not proud, you my annihilator.

19 *A Kashmiri Clerk*

Kashyap Bandhu

[Translated from Desh files By Prof. M. L. Koul, Published in the Kashmir Sentinel Dec. 1999]

If the mask of coat and pantloon is just removed, you at once find a long structure which appears to have been requisitioned from a medical hospital to be put up as an exhibit in a museum.

Official tidiness and bureaucratic fanfare do have cumulatively given him dizzying airs and limited amounts of monthly salary have extremely circumscribed the dimensions of his heart. His life is an apt presentation of a scenario of light and shade. With the commencement of Sanskarasa sunny and balmy period of comforts and ease is ushered in his life. For some it is as transient as a day. For others it is as short-lived as a couple of days. It is estimated that in the life of a clerk this season is a ten days wonder' when the son of comforts glitters with its sweet and lustrous rays. The glow-worm of pomposity also flickers and vanishes in this shortlived period. After this period is over, the shady period of poverty and wretchedness starts. It is a period of frigidity and economic adversity of limited means and earnings, more frightening than the dark days in the regions of hell. This dark period does not overwhelm him only but also wraps his wife and his entire family.

The precious life of a clerk is lost in jaded files of his office. Though an expert in the eddies of official redtape, his own life is extremely ephemeral in the total scenario of the office. Despite it, he exerts a full command over the administrative set-up including his superintendent, secretary and head of department. Even as an ephemerality he casts an effective shadow over numerous people who are salaried. Generally they are a pawn in his hands and the path that he determines for them they are obliged to take to it and the conduct he sets for them they have to cling to it. How he determines their path and conduct can find an apt analogy in 'bear and his master'. In the deep ocean of administration he is a boatman who steers the boat and saves it from going adrift. His life as a whole is devoid of engrossing interests and elegant tastes. He is looked upon as a low being for the cultivated life of servility. Instead of rummaging through the volumes of Kalidas, Philosophy, Shakespeare, Milton, Homer and epics of Ramayana and Mahabarta, he busies himself in knowing about the trivial details of his foreign officers, their dresses, relations and especially their sons-in-law and also those who had recommended their appointments in the state services and their tastes for foreign brands of tea or local varieties, petty details about their wives especially their likings for dresses, saris, and their time for going about for a stroll in the company of their maid-servants. The person called a clerk whiles away most of the time of his life in this research which turns multilateral with the advent of a new officer.

The narrow confines of his office have metamorphosed him into a rebel against the present existing system. His whole psyche is rebellious. But his deep sense of servility has reduced him to the position of a coward. What rankles his mind that he cannot speak out. Fear permeates his whole being. His servility has turned him into a short-sighted person. Except the jaded files in his office he cannot find safe shelter any where else. He firmly clings to them and conceals his overwhehning sense of rebelliousness from his friends and foes too. This mode of praxis has rendered him a slave of any Tom, Dick and Harry who assures him of getting him glued to the dusty files in his office. He can lead the flanks of a coming revolution but he requires surgery for purposes of transforming his narrowmindedness into a broadminded frame.

A clerk has a number of interesting hobbies. In imitation of his high degree officers, he takes to the playing of tennis and badminton. Sometimes impelled by the great leaders of this country he forms associations and groups. As per Pt Zind Koul he has a great love lost for potatoes and tomatoes. But his over-towering hobby is red-tape within the premises of his office. With a view to lecture his friends and contemporaries he goes for a Dal Voyage which inflates his ego. To disseminate his personal pomp and glory he invites his near and distant relatives to accompany him on a Dalvoyage. He over-loads the boat with all the invitees. Despite the cries and din of children and the cramped

space of the boat, he casts a glance on the blue mountains surrounding the lake and in a sway of mood softly murmurs. This is another aspect of Kashmir scenario.

20 A Kashmiri Ruler

Kashyap Bandhu

[Source: *Desh Files* procured from Sh. S. N. Gorkha, Translated from Urdu by Prof. M. L. Kaul.]

In our land hordes of government servants from peon to Prime Minister are labelled as rulers. Cosmic Gods live in temples. Mundane Gods also inhabit temples, which are branded as 'temples of sovereignty.' In matters of architecture the temples of cosmic Gods have a broad base which narrows down till it reaches its apex. The spires in their breadth are not more than a golden line. But architects in our country have patterned the temples of cosmic Gods on a design which differentiates them from the temples of mortal humans. If the temple of a cosmic God is tilted upside down, we can discern the 'Worldly Temple' in their impeccable design. It has the loftiness of Himalayas, flexibility of the slender waist of a female beauty and charm of the lower limbs of a frenzied lover. In administrative parlance such a construction is nomenclatured as top heavy. And it is here, in such a construction that our administrative Gods live.

In matters of classification there is no difference between cosmic Gods and mundane Gods. The temples of cosmic gods are adorned with 'murtis' imported from Jaipur and are seen nestling with home-made 'murtis'. But the 'administrative temples' are decked with mundane Gods imported from the Punjab, U.P., Madras, Bengal and occasionally from England. These imported Gods are seen jostling with homemade Gods. The ranks of cosmic Gods and mundane Gods are packed with foreign and locally-made Gods without any discrimination. It is within everybody's ken that Gods of whatever hue are oninipresent and hence cannot be differentiated on grounds of clime, colour or race.

It is said that 'God's Wand' is slow in its movement; but movement it does have. The 'government's wand' is slower than the wand of God. The fact is that 'God's wand' reaches the earth after piercing through the blue sky and seven oceans. The 'government's wand' reaches its target after undergoing lots of eddies of red-tapism. I also need the proverbial life of 'Roma Rishi' and 'Kwaza Khizar' to touch its focal point. Every common man is not fortunate enough to live a long life as that of Roma Rishi and Khizar. Hence the flourish of the 'government wand' loses its momentum much before it reaches its target.

Our rulers have framed and formulated laws and some of them are good beyond doubt. But these laws seldom come to people as they are enmeshed in the thorns of red-tapism and are lost in the depths of storm-tossed oceans with none to retrieve them.

Very lately government has set up a 'talking shop' after the pattern of 'emporium' which peddles goods of various craftsmen. The shop remains open twice a year and government and non-government members peddle their words as shop-keepers peddle their goods. This is a new industry that has started to thrive in our land. Common people have not yet made out the secrets of this industry. But it is on a fast track and is attracting everybody's attention. What is funny that the Silk Weaving Factory, Jammu Tannery, Kashmir Sheep Farm and Drug Industry figure prominently in the official reports of government, but the above-said industry does not find a mention as if it were totally non-existent.

Our rulers have launched a blitz propaganda for temperance follow the foot-prints of the Congress government which has lost power. But our rulers cannot avoid the whiff of smell emitted from liquor and has developed an addiction. They gulp pots of liquor openly and stealthily under the public gaze or in solitude. There may be some exceptions here and there, but they do not make a summer. But before laws are enacted to ban liquor sale it is essential to frame laws to root out corruption which is endemic.

Processions in honour of cosmic Gods are organised on fixed days of a year. The followers of Lord Krishna, Lord Rama, Prophet Mohammed organise massive processions on the occasion of Janam Ashtami, Rama Navami and Prophet's birthday. But the motorcade of our 'mundane Gods' does not stop till their budgeted T. A grants do not exhaust. And since Ayyanger Sahib has eternalised the T.

A. grants the motorcade of these 'earthly Gods' never stops and is ever on move and their twenty four hour service is deemed to lead this land to final salvation.

Our rulers have diverse hobbies and tastes. The latest hobby is to deal in estate. In this hobby, government patronage is quite useful. So are the pests of 'Nambardari' and 'Zaidari'. Our rulers consider these pests more efficacious than 'bee keeping'. Mr. Ayyanger has started to felter these rulers through the enactment of laws that ban dealings in land. But these rulers continue in their indulgence without dither or fear.

In the end despite all my writings you are obliged to confess that the 'administrative temple' is lit by such lights as are holier than the purity of a spinster and more life-nourishing than the miracles of Jesus Christ. To tell you the truth some such lights are so heavenly that they dispel the darkness of heresy infidelity.

21 *A Kashmiri Leader*

Kashyap Bandhu

[Source : Desh Files procured from Sh. S. N. Gorkha, Translated from Urdu by Prof. M. L. Kaul.]

One of the discerning boons that our country was blessed with in 1931 was the establishment of 'leader industry'. At the outset this 'industry' was the monopoly of two 'directors', Sheetalnath and Pather Masjid. But now the 'directors' have lost their hegemony as every household has started churning out various brands of leaders. Kashmiris labour under the idea that the 'leader industry' is profit-yielding. Some Gandhians aspire to broad-base it by transforming it from 'personal industry' into 'spinning wheel industry' and have unleashed a tide of propaganda in this behalf. What is interesting is that government spurns it out of sheer spite. Normally government waxes eloquent on the industrial enterprises in its administrative and official reports. But it has not made even an oblique reference to the 'leader industry'. Despite government indifference and cold apathy it is thriving in our country at a faster rate. That day is not far when this industry will touch a lofty height and attain an unimaginable glory. The types of goods churned out from the industry can be labelled under various brands, the top brand being 'hundred per cent leader'.

This industry manufactures countless 'toy-like leaders', who are as cheap, and fore us the Japanese toys are. In their manufacture various materials are used, their upper layers are hard and solid lest they should break and give way. Softer substances are used under the cover of harder ones like wood, stone et al. Such toys can be seen littering over the tables of a clerk, or head clerk and an office superintendent and are also put on an exhibition in the drawing rooms of big-wigs. Poets have woven poems and poems with these toys as their central theme. Some directors have researched the substances of these leaders and come to the conclusion that if a clerk was plagued with a transfer, he would earn, an immediate reprieve by reference to such toy-like leaders. But this plague is quite rampant and such a prescription is not efficacious now.

'Khwaja like leader' is another commodity of this industry. The present-day nawabs and their womenfolk live in their ivory towers which, can be well-guarded by these servile leaders. They do not permit a straw bird to perch there. They shove away a human being if he dares enter and interfere. Vested interests have emerged among ordinary populations of Hindus and Muslims, when as a matter of policy these are to be kept at bay. This task is diligently performed by the 'Khwaja like leaders' by erecting a rampart between the vested interests and Muslim-Hindu folks. They are faithful and are always at the beck and call of their masters. They guard the ramparts of faithfully and the opinion of their masters is that they are a useful commodity and serve their interests efficiently.

'100% leaders' have attained adulthood under the shadow of the Koran and the Vedas. They have declined into old age while murmuring the mantra of '100% Hindu leader' and '100% Muslim leader'. With the setting in of every season these people take a 'religious purgative' and feel an intestinal discomfort out of patriotic sentiments. The Merciful God finally relieves them of pain and discomfort. Leaders of this brand deem it necessary to formalise their ties with heaven and heavenly beauties for purposes of nation's salvation. As they are troubled by poverty of the poor, hardships of the hard-ups and nakedness of the naked, their alternative is to conceal their penury, hardship and nudity with the leaves of the Garden of Eden, which were used by Adam to hide his nudity at the time of his expulsion from Heaven.

However, this industry is yet at its initial stages. They say that it does not seem to be set for manufacturing such commodities as fine to look at, economical, superior, lasting and durable. There may be a modicum of truth in it. But we should not forget that this industry is yet in its infancy. Therefore, there is every reason if the goods churned out from this industry are not competitive in the broader country-wide market.

But in my opinion this industry is progressing well, As a matter of evidence reference can be made to Sardar Budh Sing Ji who is changing his underwear for a bigger size and Sheikh Abdullah who is replacing his Turkish cap by a Gandhian model.

22 Yim Bhatta

Dr. Rajiv Kumar, Jammu

[Courtesy: 'Kashmir Times' and 'Excelsior' December 1996]

(Pandit Kashyap Bandhu ji during his crusade against social evils prevalent in Kashmiri Pandit Community, six decades back, had written an article titled 'Yim Batta' in "Desh". It would have been desirable to print in out again as such, anticipating it would touch the deeper sense of right thinking in our community members. But the text not being available, I shall try to convey what the greatest Social Reformer of our society told me years back).

"YIM BATTA"- Look at these Pandits- is not a usual but the only reference cited by a Pandit while pointing towards a wrong going on in the society. The speaker always- as a rule- isolates his ownself and identifies the evil with other Pandits Yim Batta. The listeners immediately nod in agreement identifying their ownself with the speaker and not with the society. This kind of a situation can always be seen whenever there is an assembly of Kashmiri Pandits- be it a marriage function or any other merry making occasion. Even, the 10th day assembly by the embankment of a canal is an ideal situation for this kind of a discourse. Speaking on any subject under the sun and trying to become the best expert on the matter under discussion is an inherent character of a Panditji. This was true when Bandhuji wrote Yim Batta and this is true when these lines are being penned down today. The worst part of this character is that all of us tend to sit on judgement without bothering to self-assess our own selves. During the last seven years of life in exile, our whole life style has changed but this particular character has not been affected at all. Even after having taken the worst kind of beating on political as well as economic fronts, our community has shown total apathy towards social reform. Hypocrisy, social pride and ego continue to persist. It is futile to reiterate that ostentation in marriages is eating into our bone-marrow. All of us do know that conserving our financial resources is very essential for the good of the community especially because of our very uncertain future and frustratingly uncomfortable present. But the said affair of ostentation continues to afflict our community and we as individuals refuse to accept these short comings in our ownself and continue to point them out among others with the usual reference of 'Yim Batta.'

The present state of affairs is that our community is increasingly indulging in extravagance and exhibitionism at social functions and we feel proud of it. Giving and receiving dowry has become a status symbol. The sanctity of a wedding ceremony has completely been set aside. The self respect and honour of our women-folk is being inadvertently hurt by unscrupulous acts performed and encouraged during the process of marriage ceremony. We all do agree that this is a sign of social degradation and does not behove an enlightened community but again we take an ostrich like stand and say "Yemen Battan Kya Sa Guv." Look what these Battas are doing.

While feeling proud of being in a position to afford and indulging in extravagance, we completely ignore the sentiments of those members of our relation circle and friend circle, who are economically not that much sound. To illustrate, one Panditji while attending the wedding reception of his cousin's daughter was overwhelmed by the ostentation exhibited on the occasion and broke down on spot. He had to be removed from the scene and later confided that the people like his cousin brother had made life difficult for people like himself who also had marriageable daughters, and could not afford this kind of extravagance. And again when this particular instance was discussed among many KP Fora, a typical reply was "Yemen Battan Kya Sa Guv".

To awaken today's society, it is essential to recast the codes of family life using practical means and set down rules for self realisation. Whenever we see something that is not good for the society, let us first ensure that we do not follow this path. Instead of calling "Yim Batta" let us say 'Asy Batta' and do our level best to stand like a rock against adoption of these ostentations within the family. When the individual is good, the family is good and when the family is good the community is good. From ancient times upto the present day, an unbroken succession of God realised souls have taken birth in the world from time to time to lead the suffering and troubled mankind to their goals of self

realisation. Our Community is surely in need of another Kashyap Bandhu who would force lead us out of this cesspool of social evils.

23 *Kashyap Bandhu's Last Letter*

Dr. Rajiv Kumar, Jammu

[Courtesy : *The Excelsior* of 19.12.99]

There has been considerable pressure from within the community being applied for publication of material written by Bandhujee. This is a misfortune that with the displacement of our community en masse from the valley, much of this material has been lost forever.

Right now, I have just four of his letters at hand which were written by him. I would like to share them with the readers.

The letter dated 5th of Nov '85 happens to be the last in his life. It was written to me in response to my letters sent from Ladakh where I had been transferred just two months prior to his passing away. I had mentioned about the environmental change that a young Kashmiri mind finds in the cold desert. The letter was written in Urdu.

"My son-God with you. Your two letters have been received. Vibhu had come on 28th of Oct. along with his wife and child. After staying with me for four days he left for Jammu on 31st of Oct. I had been to Srinagar on 2nd of Nov. and returned on 3rd.

When a child is born in this world, he hears the thunder of the clouds for the first time. Through this thunder the sky conveys to the man "I exist". Next the air conveys to the man through its cold winds "I exist". In response to these the child also cries and conveys "I exist". When the first born child starts wailing - it is not that he is crying for anything- but it is the man's reply to the sky and the air that "I exist". This can be called the first environmental meeting between the man and his surroundings. This is followed by changes. Seasons change. Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter. The life changes - Childhood, Youth, Old Age and Death. Both continue their Raga of "I exist".

Forty years have passed probably when "JOSH" had come to Kashmir. He was an Indian Citizen only and his migration to Pakistan had yet to take place. The Daily "Kesri" had not been banned by then by Government of Kashmir. Dehati Sahib (God bless his soul) represented Kesri in the first Press Conference called by 'Josh Sahib". He was kind enough to convey his message through "Kesri" and did say a four lined poem. Unfortunately because of the environmental effect of old age I fail to recollect the first two lines. In spite of my trying very best I am not in a position to recollect the first two lines. The following two lines were like this

Awaz do Kashmir mein aa pohuncha josh Allah se Inteqaam-e-Adam Lene Key Liye. As you know Adam and Eve were thrown out of the Paradise by Almighty after having eaten the forbidden fruit Kashmir was nothing less than Paradise. And Josh Sahib was a communist with little faith in religion of Allah. Therefore when he reaches in Paradise he wants to convey to all that he is in Paradise to avenge Adam's expulsion. Now you try to see what an impact the environment has on the vision of the man and his reaction to Allah's action.

Both your letters smell of an environmental effect on your mind that has taken place in Ladakh.

***Zikir Jo Chal Pada Qayamat Ka
Baat Pohunchi Teri Jawani Tak.***

My dear, this is not a new thing. After seeing the Geography of Ladakh every son of Kashmir shall get environmentally disillusioned and it will take time for him to get adjusted mentally. But very soon the past and the present environments will get intermingled in his mind and in this intermingling new chapter opens up. The man then forgets as to how desolate this environment had seemed to him the first day, and how gradually he has started to like it.

When the girl leaves her parental house for her Sural, in spite of knowing that she is going to the real home, she starts crying and saying.

**"Wariwen Seet Wara Chas No
Chara Kar myon Malinav ho"**

But after sometime she laughs at her own crying. Same is true of you. After sometime a new environmental impression will be created in your mind which will be a mixture of both Kashmir and Ladakh environment. Then you will laugh at your own first reaction to Ladakh environment.

I shall wait for your next letter. I had told you earlier that old age has affected my self - determination. Your presence here was helpful in lessening the effect, Anyway keep writing weekly. I shall be waiting

Yor's - Bub."

On another occasion, I had been told that he was hard up. I had sent money as well as a letter through my driver in response to which he wrote.

'My dear Rajiv, God bless you. Your Driver alongwith your letters came to me. I was expecting you and your letter revealed the reasons of your not coming this way. The first letter revealed what was there in the other envelope.

Believe it or not, when I was hardly 12 years of age, I met God and wanted to discuss the way I will follow on my onward march in the world. The discussion continued at least for five years and finally what came out of this long discourse is

1. My ambition to leave the world better than I found it.
2. My ambition to live as a commoner in every way of my situation and surroundings.

This was granted by Almighty in abundance. Money was neither my passion nor penchant nor prefix to living for me. If there would have been some immediate need of money I would have told you outright. Whenever I will be in want of money certainly I will refer it to you. Your second letter I returned to the bearer without opening it. I was happy to see this man requesting persistently to have it. In his persistence there was neither curve of hypocrisy nor vulgarity. I began to admire the man.

I want you here immediately. Find time and come. God with you."

Once he was not keeping good health for sometime. I had written indicating our worry. My ten year old daughter had also written. He wrote back:

'Boba - Don't get disturbed when things do not go our way. The world goes so from its very inception, my boy. We should face it with grim determination otherwise its speed will crush us. If you can get a little time come this way. I am keeping quite alright. Throughout my whole life I was always at 'HIS' gunpoint but I am living. And his gun is also right in proper direction. When "He" will fire, honestly years back I have stopped worrying about it.

Tell Deedi I have received her two writings and have preserved them. Translate it to her:

***Kis Ki Nigahe Naaz Ne Parde Utha Diye
Armaan Dil ke Phir Se jawan Ho Gaye Bahot.***

God with you

- Bub"

During the course of my service, I was on the crossroads and decision taking was being difficult.

He wrote me

"Boba - God with you. We are anxious, very anxious to know what made you not to come to this place. It was not fair of you not to come this way knowing well that anxious hearts are yearning to see you and to know the streaks of your future are passing on which way and projecting what sides.

I have read your letter. They are all plans for future and these plans are yet to be drawn by the bureaucracy in the usual way. Man is entirely helpless under the stress of this bureaucratic drawing box. Its instruments turn abruptly sometimes to the left and then instantly to the right; of course, have their own logic for left and right turn. I can't advise you on the details though I fervently believe in

details and wish to give you my opinion in detail. In the resent case I know very little. As so, I will advise you to pray to God sincerely and take your own decision for the future.

The stick you had sent has broken.

***Laathi Bali - Mili ho Agar is ki Rag Se Rag
Bekar Top jis key Hoon Purzey Alag Alag.***

My love to you all

- Bub

[The Fourteenth death anniversary of Pt. Kashyap Bandhu falls on 18.12.99]

24 Noted Historian's Views on "Martand"

13-C, Kailash Apartments,
Lala Lajpat Rai Road,
New Delhi - 110048
January 27, 1986
Dear Dr. Moza,

I apologise for the delay in acknowledging your letter of 25th Ult. due to my indifferent health.

I am of the view that the "Martand" of Srinagar which has the distinction of being the oldest running paper in Kashmir, needs to be revitalized and built into a healthy organ of the Valley as a whole and of the Kashmiri Pandit society in particular. It has to be a vigorous journal capable of voicing the aspirations, of our community which thanks to the hard and intelligent work of our younger generation is making itself felt in all spheres of activity both in India and abroad. Personally, I feel, the present is the golden age of the Kashmiri Pandits notwithstanding the tremendous difficulties they have to face.

I have a personal knowledge of the founding of the journal in 1932-33 when I was a member of the Yuvak Sabha led by Pandit Killam and Pandit Kashyap Bandhu. I distinctly recollect the day when Bandhuji left for Lahore to purchase a Litho flat-bed press which was installed at Shitalnath and its trial run arranged with the help of the proprietors of the Vish Nath Press. The late Pandit Gwash Lal Kaul took over as its first editor.

Right from the beginning, the Martand faced financial difficulties which were met with from the proceeds of the mochhipholu or monthly contribution of rice by every Kashmiri Pandit family. These were hard days for the journal but thanks to the determination of the community as a whole the "Martand" weathered the storm.

Numerous were the occasions when Martand voiced the grievances of the community and it would fill a volume to enumerate them. But when subsequently the paper became involved in petty internal bickerings of the so-called leaders it lost grace. But now is the time when it needs to be set on firm foundations. Who will do it and how, is a million-dollar question ?

I am happy you have set the ball rolling and I am sure the lead will result in the Martand achieving the preeminent position among its contemporaries.

Wishing you success in this laudable enterprise.

Yours sincerely,
Sd/-

P. N. K. Bamzai

Dr. B. K. Moza,
Editor "The Vitasta",
211, Park Street,
Calcutta - 700017.

[Reproduced from the Vitasta Annual 1985 - Martand Number.]

25 Mahatma Kashyap Bandhu

Jia Lal Geeru, Noorpora*, Kashmir

[*The piece is an obituary published in THE MARTAND dated 27th December 1985 and reproduced in the VITASTA ANNUAL 1985 - Martand Number]

Shri Tara Chand 'Bulbul', better known as Kashyap Bandhu, breathed his last on December 18, 1985 at his ancestral home at Geeru (renamed Noorpora) a village 35 kilometres to the south-east of Srinagar. He was eighty-seven, and is survived by his wife and a son.

'Bulbul' demonstrated extraordinary intelligence, an independent bent of mind and what could be called revolutionary ideas in twenties of this century, from his early childhood. He aspired for higher education and could go ahead but for general poverty and lack of facilities in the field then. He entered the then Land Settlement Department as Munshi, but could not get along with what he found a suffocating feudal administrative and social set-up. He wrote a lampoon on the set-up, resigned his job, left his home, and went to Lahore where he stayed with one of his village friends who was working in the Railways. Unable to find a job he went to Quetta where he came into contact with some revolutionary personalities impressing them with his dash and fervour. He returned to Lahore and took up editorship of Arya Gazette, the then organ of the Arya Samaj. Here he came into contact with many other important personalities of the then Punjab like Raja Narindra Nath, Bhai Paramananda, Khushal Chand of 'Milap' and Deshbandhu. In fact Deshbandhu became his political guru and Tara Chand re-named himself as Kashyap Bandhu. He learnt Sanskrit, and got married in a reputed Kashmiri Pandit family which had long ago migrated from Kashmir.

The entire country was in turmoil during those days as the independence movement was assuming new dimension. Kashyap Bandhu also was arrested in connection with Saunders murder at Lahore. This was his first arrest. He was set free soon on being found innocent.

In 1931, when the boat of Kashmiri Pandits was caught in the whirlpool of communal disturbance in the Valley, Kashyap Bandhu rushed to the rescue of the leaderless, rudderless and slumbering community. With his fervour for social work and organisms capacity, he immediately set to the task of establishing the Sanatan Dharam Yuvuk Sabha (now ASKPC) at Sharika Bhawan after reclaiming the swamp around the ancient Sheetalnath Temple. He also started a movement of social reform female education, widow re-marriage, limitations on dowry as also the supreme necessity of unity among Kashmiri Pandits. By his constant preaching he succeeded in making the Pandit women give up the old headgear and the cumbersome pheran and to switch over to the saree. Sheetalnath became the centre of the activities of the Biradari and Kashyap Bandhu, pioneer of the movement. Youngmen of the community took up the professions of barbers, tailors, masons and shoe-sellers. The daily Urdu Martand, established by Bandhuji, became the voice of the community. His magical pen made the paper a force in the Valley. He succeeded in getting around him many selfless and patriotic young men of the community like Jialal Kilam, Prem Nath Bazaz, Shiv Narain Fotedar and Prem Nath Kanna along with whom he was imprisoned during the Bread Agitation started by Kashmiri Pandits in 1933-34.

A visionary that he was, Bandhuji approached Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, the President of J & K Muslim Conference, in 1932 seeking creation of a joint front by Hindus and Muslims in Kashmir. The ideas materialized in 1939 with the creation of J & K National Conference under Sheikh Sahib and Bandhuji was the first to join it along with some of his colleagues in the Sabha. He started an Urdu weekly Desh preaching socialism, upliftment of villages and villagers as also demanding civil rights for the populace irrespective of any consideration of caste or creed. The presentation of the "National Demand" to the then ruler, and later the Quit Kashmir movement in 1946 saw Bandhuji in jail so many times upto 1947.

The independence of India and the creation of Pakistan in 1947, and the consequent economic blockade disrupted life in J & K. The loot and plunder by the raiders sent thousands of refugees,

Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs from the north and west of Kashmir to Srinagar. It was a very critical period in the history of Kashmir. Rising to the occasion, Maharaja Hari Singh acceded to India and invited Sheikh Abdullah to form an emergency Government in the State. Bandhuji was made the Emergency Relief and Rehabilitation Officer. It was his job to accommodate and feed the refugees in very adverse circumstances and this he did very smoothly and ably.

After stabilization of conditions in the State in 1984, Sheikh Abdullah was appointed Prime Minister and Bandhuji became the Director-General, Rural Reconstruction. He had the Rural Development and Panchayat Departments under his direct control apart from Co-operation, Agriculture and Animal Husbandry Departments under his supervision. He again rose to the occasion. With his rural background and rustic sense he became instrumental in laying foundations of real rural development with HALASHARI (voluntary labour) constructing village link roads and canals, raising nurseries and plantation beats etc. Shopian Aharbal Road, Nowpowra-Babarishi Road and other roads and canals and plantations at Dub Akcora, Tulamulla and Ganderbal are among many of his achievements during this period. With the change of Government in 1953. Bandhuji was arrested alongwith Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and others. He declined all overtures from Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad for changing sides. The final release of Sheikh Sahib in 1964 and the process of liberalization set in motion by Mr. Ghulam Mohammad Sadiq in 1964 gave Bandhuji another chance, as Project Officer of Sonawari Project, to complete his unfinished job of rural development in the Valley.

Only about two weeks before he breathed his last, Bandhuji addressed a congregation of Kashmiri Hindus in Srinagar emphasising the unity of the Biradari.

May his soul rest in eternal peace.

26 Kashyap Bandhu - "Martand's" First Editor

Prof. T. N. Moza, Jammu

Reproduced from the Vitasta Annual, 1985 - Martand Number

With the short space of a few pages, it is a formidable task to assess the multifaceted personality of late Shri Kashyap Bandhu and his contribution in the field of social service, politics and journalism in the J & K State. As a political leader he always thought ahead of times. Even in his "swansong speech" which he delivered at the Conference of All-India Kashmiri Pandits, held in December 1985, in Srinagar, he rightly advised the Kashmiri Pandits to look to Srinagar rather than to New Delhi for support or assistance. This advice could come only from the mouth of a leader of maturity and high political acumen. He had the correct understanding of the political, social and economic problems of the J & K State. Even up to the last minute he struggled hard to help the members of the community in one way or the other. The letter which he has addressed to my brother, Dr. B.K. Moza, the Editor of the VITASTA, from his death-bed speaks of his sincerity and good intentions to contribute an article for the Special Martand Number of the Vitasta, Calcutta.

Kashyap Bandhu had his early training and initiation in journalism at Lahore where he was associated with the publication of the Weekly Arya Gazette which was the official organ of the Arya Samaj. In fact, his entry in politics, he owes to Arya Samaj an organization which did not only desire to rid Hinduism of its evils of casteism and other social evils but also actively involved itself in the freedom movement by responding to the clarion call given by Mahatma Gandhi when he launched the historic Non-Cooperation Movement. The Arya Samaj was one of the few organizations which responded befittingly by throwing thousands of its workers in the freedom movement and also set up a network of educational institutions all over India for promoting the cause of Independence and realization of its objectives. It was in Lahore that Kashyap Bandhu came in contact with the top-ranking Nationalist leaders who were fired with patriotism and imbued with highest sense of idealism. Kashmir could not remain uninfluenced by what was happening outside the J & K State. Accordingly, in the thirties of the present century, Sheikh Mohammad Abd.ullah founded All J & K Muslim Conference, which subsequently was changed into National Conference. Kashyap Bandhu actively associated himself with All-J & K Yuvak Sabha for some time. It was in this period that the Daily Martand, the second Daily of the J & K State, was started. Kashyap Bandhu's contribution in the launching and stabilization of the Daily Martand remains unexcelled. As a Kashmiri Pandit leader, it was uppermost in his heart to rid the Kashmiri Pandit community of the decadent customs, rituals and other sterile practices. Appropriately, through the columns of The Martand, Kashyap Bandhu made full and vigorous use of his facile pen to propagate the ideas of social reform in the community through his column, Challant. Every reader looked avidly to a copy of the Martand, to go through Challant. The Daily Martand was able to increase its circulation and earn respectability in the eyes of the Government and the other political parties, thanks to late Kashyap Bandhu. He along with a band of dedicated social workers, was able not only to popularise the social reforms among the Kashmiri Pandits, but also succeeded, in ample measure, in raising funds for the continued existence of the Martand. Among those workers and writers who assisted Kashyap Bandhu in the achievement of his objectives were Shri Shyam Lal Gurtoo, Shri Shambu Nath Ogra, the revered father of Shri M.K. Ogra, Pt. Sat Lal Sadhu, Pt. Ram Chand Abhai and other sincere workers. The Daily Martand became a popular newspaper under the stewardship of Pt. Kashyap Bandhu as its first Editor. However, with the assumption of the Presidentship of the Sabha by Pandit Sheo Narain Fotedar, he along with Pt. Jia Lal Kilam resigned from the Yuvak Sabha and joined the National Conference. Pt. Shambu Nath Ogra also joined the Weekly Kesari which came out under the editorship of Kashyap Bandhu. Bandhu Ji gave reasons for his new political stance by writing an editorial captioned "Tabdil-Iqulab" i.e. "Change of heart". The paper was banned when Sheikh Abdullah started the National Demand Agitation in 1938. He with Jia Lal Kilam, Shambu Nath Peshin, Shyam Lal Saraf, Shambu Nath Ogra and other Kashmiri Pandit leaders courted imprisonment. The Weekly Kesari

was banned by the Maharaja's Government. Subsequently with the release of the National Conference leaders, Kashyap Bandhu started again his weekly, *The Desh*, which was a strong supporter of the National Conference Movement headed by Sheikh Abdullah. Pandit Jia Lal Kilam also started his own paper the weekly *Quam-i-Dard* and Pt. Amar Nath Kak published his weekly *Vichar*. Pt. Shambhu Nath Ogra was its Editor. *Kesari & Desh* which were edited by Kashyap Bandhu were the popular weeklies which attracted attention of the readers all over the State. Through his column he highlighted the hardships and difficulties faced by Kashmiris and articulated their grievances against the feudal autocracy. The humorous column of Kashyap Bandhu which reappeared in *Kesari* and subsequently in *Desh* poured sarcasm, scorn and contumely on the functioning of the Maharaja Hari Singh's Government.

Kashyap Bandhu with other Kashmiri Pandit leaders such as Pt. Amar Nath Kak, Pt. S.N. Fotedar, Pt. Shambu Nath Dhar, Pt. Janardhan Teng offered satyagraha in the Durganag Temple Agitation. Kashyap Bandhu and other Nationalist Pandit leaders were also imprisoned in this agitation. It was again given to Kashyap Bandhu to have been incarcerated in the historic Quit Kashmir Movement launched by Sheikh Abdullah in May, 1946. Kashyap Bandhu was lodged in Kathua jail. Later the Maharaja's Government, at the intervention of Mahatma Gandhi and the pressure on the nationalist public opinion, was forced to release Sheikh Abdullah and other Nationalist leaders in 1947. In the Emergency Government, constituted by Sheikh Abdullah, Kashyap Bandhu looked after the rural affairs. He was also made the Director of Dehat Sudhar Department when a regular Government was set up by Sheikh Abdullah. He continued in this capacity till 9th August, 1953, when he was imprisoned again by Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed's Government with the deposition of Sheikh Abdullah. After his release from the prison he practically retired from the politics though in his personal capacity he had the courage of conviction to support Sheikh Saheb.

Bandhuji literally was a "folksy" type of leader who had understood the problems of the rural folk. The amelioration of their lot was uppermost in his heart. He highlighted the rural news in all the papers which he edited. Viewed in the present context, whatever he preached in the thirties and forties of the present century has been incorporated in the twenty-point programme. He was a journalist par excellence. His features "Challant" or "Pagal Ki Diary" attracted State-wide attention. Some of his well-written and thought-provoking articles were reproduced by the pre-1947 Lahore Press. He combined clear thinking with a sense of humour and sarcasm. The "Challant" always reflected social evils of the community and also oppressive rule of feudal autocracy. I still remember the heading of the "Challant" captioned, "Banami Shukar Divta Wazarati Shumali". A dig was made on the then District Commissioner of the district for his policy of extortion and oppression. Kashyap Bandhu left an indelible mark of his personality on the *Martand* which he edited for some time. His contribution to the betterment of Kashmiris will ever be remembered by the right thinking people. The *Daily Martand* during the course of his editorship attracted articles and contribution from well-known Kashmiri writers such as Pt. Premnath Pardesi, the noted short story writer, Master Zinda Kaul, Pt. Dinanath Nadim, Pt. Brijmohan Datatriya Kaifi, Mahjoor Kashmiri, Pt. Arjan Dev Majboor, Shri J.N. Jagyasu, Pt. Dinanath Dilgir, Pt. Shyamlal Wali, Tirath Kashmiri (revered father of Bansi Nirdosh), Prof. Nand Lal Kaul Talib, Pt. Ganghadhar Bhat, Dehati Kashmiri, Pt. Dinanath Mast Kashmiri, and many other literatuers. The words of a Sharikawar speech delivered by Kashyap Bandhu 'Shakhsityen ati jati hein, Organisation ki Puja Karo' (Personalities come and go, it is the organization which is to be worshipped) remains a fine piece of advice given by late Kashyap Bandhu, relevant as much today as it was in context of the thirties of the present century when he addressed mammoth gatherings of Kashmiris at Hari Parbat, Srinagar. Kashyap Bandhu's forte lay in practising what he preached. He became a legendary figure in the community when his social reform songs particularly the Popularization of Khaddar Saris namely "Chhui-mubarak Dhoti Maharenai" and "Mali Saban Tan Kari Prenai" became of household song and would be sung as a folksong (Chakri) by the women on the occasions of marriages and religious festivals. Bandhuji's sense of humour is also revealed by a poem which he wrote in retaliation when a Jammu Muslim Conference

Weekly edited by Allaha Rakha Sagar assailed Sheikh Sahib's secularism and nationalist ideology. A hemistich from the poem is reproduced :

***"Talein Jo Gulgulay Pakiatan Ki Kadai Mein
Abbas dastpanah Sagar Halwai Ban jai"***

His Challant on "Mahatarmoo Ki Conference" in Desh, "Fir Ha Fir Ha Ha Karyo, Bekal Bayo Fir Ha Faryo" (Decrying ostentatious and vulgar display of wealth on Kashmiri marriages). "Zameenan Kissanan Di", "Guess paper for K.C.S. candidates" etc. were not only written in humorous vein but also reflected the social and economic problems of Kashmiris as a whole. The best tribute that could be paid to late Kashyap Bandhu would be to resurrect Martand from its ashes like the proverbial bird phoenix. The Martand, in its new form, could provide sound leadership and correct direction to the community. Let it not be forgotten that the Martand, in its new form, should provide such a fare to its readers as can enable them to imbibe the philosophy and the spirit of the 21st century.

27 Social Awakening During the Thirties & The Advent of the "Martand"

Late Jankinath Kaul "Kamal", Jammu

[Reproduced from the Vitasta Annual, 1985 - Martand Number]

The Martand was started in Srinagar, Kashmir in the early thirties of the present century by Pandit Kashyap Bandhu. A living apostle of social consciousness, he appeared on the scene of social and political awakening in the Kashmiri Pandit community at the time when it had gone slack and sluggish in respect of socio-religious activities. This was perhaps because of the suppressed contentment in those days when the value of a rupee was as much as a hundred rupees today. Bandhuji happened to take up the lost threads of leadership of the community after the fateful injunctions of Chamba Nath and Hargopal Kaul, the latter then rightly called 'the Lion of Kashmir'.

If the boyhood memory does not betray me, I recall that there was the Sanatan Dharma Sabha which took care of the socio-religious activities of the community. Although, due to reasons unknown, its influence was diminishing slowly, it was mainly confined to the educated class. Sunday meetings were held in the hall available in the dharamshala of the Raghunath Mandir on the banks of the Vitasta (the Jhelum) near Fateh Kadal. Evening paathshalas were run and aided by the State Government. Bhagwad-Gita Mahimna-Stotra, Panchastavi, Bhavani-Sahasranam, and Sandhya were taught. The Sanatan Dharma Sabha held examinations both in theory and practical of Sandhya on the ghais of the Vitasta. Not only do I possess the certificate of having passed this examination, but it continues to be a part of my daily ablution and worship also.

Then followed acute unemployment in the State and as a result of prevailing hardships, the 'Bread Movement' was started by a dedicated band of youngmen, most of whom were detained in prison. This was the time when Pandit Kashyap Bandhu emerged as a leader and attracted the attention of the masses. He introduced the use of saree by the Kashmiri Pandit women as a symbol of social change towards simple and austere living abandoning the extravagance associated with 'zarbaaf' pheran, etc. In a large gathering of Kashmiri Pandits, who had assembled at Sharika Chakreshwara, Hari Parbat, he administered to them the oath to adopt and follow sincerely the social reforms advocated by him. Thereafter weekly mass meetings on Sunday mornings were organized there, and Sunday those days became known as Sharikawaar for the community. Prabhat pheris were held to strengthen the religious and moral standing of the people. During the time Bandhujee was held in Drison, people panted for his honest guidance. When, late Shri Prem Nath Bazaz, his second-in-command, visited him in the prison, Bandhuji emotionally enquired: 'Prema, dootya kotu watse?, (O Prem, how is the use of saree going?) This was the intensity with which all earnest people worked then. The Bread Movement also resulted in the reinstatement of those serving in the Food Control Department who had been retrenched enmasse. Pt. Kashyap Bandhu became the acclaimed leader of the Kashmiri Pandit community.

With the political upheavals everywhere, the old Sanatan Dharam Sabha at sometime ceased to function and in its place came the Sanatan Dharma Yuvak Sabha and the Daily Martand (Urdu) was started as its official organ. Pt. Kashyap Bandhu was the first editor of this daily. Later, it acquired a press and continued to serve the community, as far as I can remember, for over three decades. Meanwhile, the venue for various socio-cultural activities and mass meetings of the community shifted to Shital Nath, Sathu in Srinagar, This new place had till then been serving as the spiritual resort of many ascetics. In the picturesque surroundings of trees, creepers, mounds and water bodies and a temple of Bhairava, these people found lasting quietitude. Originally, the Chhari Mubarak, leading the pilgrims to the holy Amamathji's cave, also used to start from this place of sanctity and serenity. With the change in times, the locality became crowded and the area was prepared to serve as a ground for public meetings of the community. A dharamshala also came up later and it now houses the Hindu High School.

Pandit Kashyap Bandhu was also instrumental in raising another building, the Sharika Bhawan, which served as the headquarters of the Sanatan Dharam Yuvak Sabha and the Martand.

Since a single sheet of a newspaper is a veritable miniature of the whole world, the Martand gave the right start in cultivating among the youngmen the spirit of integration. But somehow the time, fast heading toward a democratic set-up in India, saw the cause of the Martand defeated. Ultimately, it altogether stopped publication, the author believes, sometime in the sixties. The watering down of social values in the Pandit community and the overall political awakening around, there set in a process of fission at every level of Pandit life - social, family and individual. With further escalation of economic and political difficulties, younger members of the community started leaving their land of birth to seek new pastures of opportunity in education and professions elsewhere in the country and outside. Pandits now became a very small minority community in Kashmir. Obviously, in the process the Martand suffered immensely as everything else.

In its new birth, the Martand is seven years old and in a new garb: an English weekly. But the standard that a lively paper should have to attract thoughtful writers for effective propagation of ideal values of life remains still to be attained. A few years ago, a meeting of writers and well-wishers was called in at the Shital Nath premises to consider means and ways of improving the standard of the Martand. The present author was one of the invitees to this meeting. A number of thoughtful suggestions were offered which have yet to be seen crystallized into a concrete plan of action. Nevertheless, the author believes that the present exercise under the auspices of the Vitasta will bear fruit.

28 My Reminiscences of the Martand

Shri A. N. Fotedar, Jammu

"How I wish I were to forget half the things I remember; and remember half the things that I have forgotten".

Over a long period of time memories often get blurred and some fade away. What had appeared very important then, looks so trivial in the present day context. However, some events and the principal actors who played key parts remain vivid in one's memory. One such event is the resurgence of the Kashmiri Pandits, establishment of Sanatan Dharam Yuvak Sabha and launching of its official organ, the Martand, following the fateful events of July 1931. The salient points that came to my knowledge about all this, are quite fresh in my memory and I recall the same with pleasure in the following few paragraphs. However, when all this happened I was a young boy at school and, therefore, hardly realised the far-reaching effects the events subsequently would have on the body politic of the State.

How and in what manner the name of the most important archaeological monument, the temple of Martand, situated at Mattan plateau about 1.6 Kms from the famous Mattan springs and dedicated to Vishnu-Surya, built during the reign of the most illustrious king of Kashmir, Lalitaditya Muktapida (8th- century AD) came to be given to the paper, was not known to me. Only recently did the late Pt. Kashyap Bandhu reveal that it was suggested to him by the Late Pt. Gwasha Lal Koul, the veteran journalist of his time. All the same it looks quite obvious that the name "Martand", in relation both to the magnificent edifice and its illustrious builder, Lalitaditya Muktapida, represented the noblest and the mightiest, respectively, that Kashmir has witnessed in its long history. Figuratively too the word "Martand", meaning the Sun God, would also imply lighting up, so to say, the dark and bleak areas of social, cultural and political scenario then prevailing in Kashmir. The latter state of affairs was a resultant of long years of chaos, rapine, social and religious persecution that the people generally and especially those who became a minority in the course of history, had suffered all these years. It would be presumptuous on my part to dwell any further on this subject as I am not competent to do so. However, a number of books have come to be written on the subject; but quite a few of these have dealt with this crucial period in the history of Kashmir rather subjectively. It has naturally made the task of assessment of the historical aftermath of the events preceding and following the events of the fateful year 1931 rather difficult for the younger and future generations to come.

Reverting back to the subject of the Martand, my impression of its birth and its heydays during 1930s and early 1940s, is both vague and vivid at the same time. How and, in what manner, it took its birth is rather vague ; whatever I remember at this stage is based on what I came to learn second hand, from elders long after the fateful events. But I have vivid recollection of what tremendous impact it had on socio-political scene and the people, especially the minority community, and the politics of the State, I recollect that when the late Pt. Kashyap Bandhu, broke like a tornado on the then suspense-laden desolate socio-political scene of Kashmir in 1931, it had an electrifying effect on the entire scene inasmuch as the leaderless minority Kashmiri Pandit community got a shot in the arm and it awoke from its long slumber of inaction and resignation to the whims and caprices of the oppressive and, even the so-called tolerant, rulers whose benevolence had only benefited a few families.

Whatever be the causes of the minority community's backlash in 1931, besides the immediate happenings of July of the same year, the enthusiasm and the total involvement of the community was to be seen to be believed. The few people whom I remember to be among the top leaders and organizers of the movement after the formation of the Sanatan Dharam Yuvak Sabha, besides Pt. Kashyap Bandhu, were the late Pt. Premnath Bazaz, late Pt. Sheo Narian Fotedar, late Pt. Jia lal Killam, Pt. Damodhar Bhatt Hanjoora was my contemporary at Lahore while he was doing his LL. B. in mid 1930s and I recall that the late Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah spent a night or two with Pt. Damodhar Bhatt and we all were hard put to find an extra long charpoy to enable him sleep comfortably.

While on this subject I recall that the late Sheikh was donning Khaddar. It was an unusual phenomenon for a President of the J & K Muslim Conference, a body not identified with the Gandhian ideology or even going along the national mainstream to be so attired. It was for the first time that I saw him face to face. The conversation that he had during his stay with us and his being attired in spotless white Khaddar, made a lasting impression on my immature and young but impressionable mind. I could hardly believe all that I had learnt about him and his movement from responsible persons prior to this meeting. From an alleged rank communalist he became to me, an upright, secular and a person with a broad outlook on all matters, including religion. I carried this impression for a long time.

Reverting back to the subject of this article, the leadership of the Sabha appeared to all of us young boys and youngmen to be above board in every respect and even above suspicion like Caesar's wife. They drew large crowds wherever they were slated to speak, whether it be Shitalnath grounds or any place in the rural area. I recollect that the main theme of the speeches was social reform, especially in marriages, widow remarriage, change in the shabby and cumbersome unbecoming dress of the Kashmiri Pandit ladies and emphasising the urgent, and even desperate need of welding the community into an united and effective minority. In this process, the daily Martand started in the same year with the late Pt. Kashyap Bandhu as its founder Editor played the most important and effective role.

I recall that there was hardly a Kashmiri Pandit house where this paper could not be found. It was printed and published from the Shitalnath headquarters of the Sabha. I remember that a spastic young village boy was the runner who delivered this paper to our house. I believe that as Urdu was the most commonly understood language even in the villages, the policy makers of the Sabha had rightly adopted it as the language for this paper. The choice of the late Kashyap Bandhu as its Editor was the best, as he not only had wide journalistic experience by having been a regular contributor to the Pratap and Akhbari Aam of Lahore, but he had also worked as the Editor of the prestigious "Arya Gazette". He wielded a facile and a powerful pen : the editorials and other features by him in the Martand were not easily understood by we youngsters as they were written in high-flown language and were usually sarcastic and satirical in dealing with the social and political matters of the day.

Most of these were discussed in family and other groups when even youngsters got opportunity to understand and appreciate, their message and import. Apart from the editorials and a round-up of news, the two features which I vividly remember were -Pagal ki Diary and Chalant.

After some years, the editorship was taken over by Shri P.N. Kanna, who also wielded a facile and powerful pen. In the same period the paper carried daily important national news which it received through wire-services from some News Agency. Thus it no longer remained confined to carry local news only, but it also embarked on the process of becoming a national daily. I believe that the Martand was perhaps the first daily newspaper to have been started in the State.

When I left home in 1935 for higher studies the paper continued to be well-circulated and liked for its contents and the variety of reading material that it provided. I do, however, recollect that palpable cracks and fissures had started appearing in the erstwhile well-knit organisation and some of the leaders had started drifting away. I am not competent even to attempt an analysis of the causes for this phenomenon nor is the present occasion an appropriate one to dilate on this subject. My view at best would be those of an individual, but an impartial and a keen observer at that. In conformity with the views of many such persons, these would show, how, unseemly actions of some men, having come to occupy responsible positions due to the trust and faith reposed in them by the people, could destroy even such organisations as S. D. Y. Sabha, which was well-founded and did remarkable work in its initial phases.

For whatever reasons the leadership of the Sabha fell out, it adversely affected the Martand in as much as both its quality, content and circulation dropped considerably. Its management and finances were in shambles. With regards to the latter, there were scandals galore, especially after the exit of

most of the top leadership from the parent organisation. In the course of subsequent years especially during the two decades after 1947, it almost became a one-man paper with hardly any literary content and only limited itself to project one or the other personality, who happened to be at the helm of affairs in the Sabha, which by then, was existing only in name. Most of the intelligentsia had scrupulously kept aloof from this set up.

The later story of its ignominious end and cessation of publication and the clandestine disposal of its assets including the machinery, are too fresh and distasteful even to recollect. Its rebirth as an English weekly under the same name is too recent to write about. I have followed this newspaper right from its birth a few years ago. But after getting thoroughly disillusioned with its content and politics. I regretfully had to discontinue being a subscriber. From its very inception this reborn Martand has suffered from the same ills and lack of proper, dedicated, united and disciplined leadership and the cadres. These very things had been the bane of its illustrious predecessor. I am second to none, and with whom it is almost an article, of faith, in holding that we need a strong and well-knit, organisation of dedicated people with a broad outlook on matters affecting the wellbeing of the Kashmiris generally. Its organ, appropriately named Martand should and must bring out in modern idiom, the greatness and the glory that is our common heritage, irrespective of our present-day caste, colour and creed. This does not, by any manner or means, preclude the paper to ventilate the just and legitimate grievances of any people, especially the minority. I strongly believe and hope that such an organization and its official organ Martand would surely have the support and backing of all the right thinking men, especially the Kashmiris, all over the country and even abroad. However, change is inherent in all things and matters and organisations and their organs, are no exception. Those, have to be adapted to meet the demands and challenges not only of the present day, but also those of the future. The only unchanging and everlasting values are the integrity and selfless service of the men and women who come to be at the helm of affairs. It has been proved, time and again, that men make and destroy organisations. It is only the persons, with whom integrity and selfless service are a creed rather than a matter of convenience, who build up time-tested and everlasting traditions for any organisation, be it religious, social or political or any combination of these. I am confident that there is no dearth of such people in our society.

It would, I believe, be appropriate to conclude this short article with the following stanza from "The passing of Arthur" by Tennyson:

"The old order changeth, yielding place to new
And God fulfils himself in many ways,
Lest one good custom should corrupt the world".

29 Pandit Kashyap Bandhu - A Tribute

Prof. S. L. Pandit, New Delhi

It so chances that prior to the historical watershed that shook Jammu and Kashmir by the mid summer of 1931, I had never met Pandit Kashyap Bandhu. By 1930 I had completed my educational career when someone informed me that he had worked as a petty revenue official at my rural birth-place of Kulgam, District Anantnag, under the name of "Tara Chand Kaul Bulbul". Some time later, as I learnt, he had left Kashmir for the Punjab and worked for the Arya Samaj reformist movement and also edited a journal, Arya Gazette, through the medium of Urdu. Then came the political upheaval of 1931 which shook our community and we were sort of stirred out of a sense of complacency nurtured during the sway of the Jammu based Dogra Maharajas since 1846. Pandit Kashyap Bandhu suddenly swept into this scene with the impact of a storm. By this time some of the young enthusiasts of our community, like Prem Nath Bazaz, and Damodhar Bhat of Hanjura had laid the foundation of Kashmir Pandit Yuvak Sabha to replace our older and traditional social organization Sanatan Dharam Sabha, based at Raghunath Mandir and controlled by older persons, the most vocal of them being Pandit Hargopal Kaul. Then, propelled by a historical earth tremor, a new set of leaders came on the stage at the now well-nigh demolished historic K.P. Site of Shital Nath temple, Srinagar. Among these new activists could be mentioned, besides some younger enthusiasts, Pandit Jia Lal Kilam, a leading legal practitioner and Pandit Kashyap Bandhu just returned from his. voluntary exile from outside the valley of Kashmir. By 1930, I had completed my post-graduate course at the University of Lucknow with distinction and was waiting for securing a decent teaching assignment. So, apart from engaging myself in private coaching assignments, I was completely free to attend the K.P. public meetings and had just established a cordial social relationship with Pandit Jia Lal Kilam a promising youthful legal practitioner an association that lasted till Shri Kilam's exit from life.

Into this scene almost suddenly burst Pandit Kashyap Bandhu about whom I had learnt only by report till then. So, when I first heard him address at a crowded K.P. gathering at Shital Nath, I felt thrilled by the sheer power of his oratory in Urdu. When I say this, let me mention that during my student days at Lucknow (1928-30) I had occasions to listen to the orations of some of our outstanding contemporary national leaders, like Bipin Chandra Pal, Lala Lajpat Rai, Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, Pandit Motilal Nehru, Maulana Hasrat Mohani, and, lastly, that wonderful dreamer, poet, and unequalled orator, Sarojini Naidu, known as the Nightingale of India. Even so I felt it then and I recall that Pandit Bandhu impressed me as an orator fit to rank among our stalwarts of the Indian freedom movement. I can even now at my very advanced age of over ninety two years recall with a thrill and quote an Urdu couplet with which Bandhuji opened his oration and captured the full attention of his crowded audience : -

***"Fir bahar ayi hai gulshan main meray nalay huay,
Fir meray dagay - janoon aatish kay parkalay huay"***

I may not attempt to translate this couplet, for as a teacher I believe that no genuine piece of poetry can be adequately reproduced through a medium foreign to its original text.

I may not venture to cover here the events of 1931-32 nor the years that followed (1932-1938) after the two commissions forced on the Maharaja, -headed by Glancy and Middleton, both senior British officers of the I.C.S. cadre - and how later the Imperial British Power had extracted more than a pound of flesh from Maharaja Hari Singh, by taking possession of the Gilgit base and by thrusting a British Premier, Colonel Colvin, and other lent officers - both British and Indian - on his unwilling shoulders and all consideration for the grievances of Kashmiri Muslims - some of which were no doubt genuine were forgotten by the world till the latest historic watershed of 1947-48.

During this phase of partial rehabilitation of our minority community - 1932 to 1938 - Bandhuji distinguished himself as a powerful and unmatched journalist through his wonderful' editorship of our community organ, The Daily Martand, and by a vigorous movement for social reform, paving the

way for encouragement of higher education among our women folk, for discarding the outworn traditional female dress of pheran with its complicated costly trimmings, and even encouraging weddings of our young and children widows. He also initiated a genuine movement for curtailing our extravagances alas, now revived beyond limits with a vengeance relating to our weddings and other traditional and elaborate ceremonials related to our normal careers from birth to death.

In this movement Bandhuji was vigorously assisted by Mrs. Vimla Bandhu, an educated girl whom Bandhuji had married during his earlier sojourn outside Kashmir before 1931, and , if I recall correctly, Vimlaji was the first woman student to join the S.P. College, Srinagar, for her degree course of the Punjab University, Lahore. As for Bandhuji's distinction as a journalist, a reputed contemporary Publicity Secretary of J & K Government once told me that, during that period - 1932 to 1938 - practically all the ministers and senior administrators would regularly peruse The Daily Martand, for its local coverage, its unbeatable editorials and its special humorous write ups.

Then the year 1938 stands out as the start of a new chapter in Kashmir history. During that year several Muslim leaders initiated the so-called "National Demand" raised mainly by the Muslim leaders for a substantial move towards a fullfledged democratic constitution for Jammu and Kashmir. This was followed by a phase of agitation, mostly peaceful, in which non-Muslim K.P. political activists like Pandit Jia Lal Kilam, Pandit Prem Nath Bazaz, Dr. S.N. Peshim, Bandhuji and Sardar Budh Singh participated. Some of them were sentenced to short term imprisonments for participating in anti-Government demonstrations. Pandit Shiv Narayan Fotedar, rather a late participant in active politics, stood aloof and did not join the National Conference, which emerged out of this movement. Fotedar Sahib, however, continued to serve his community till his demise without risking any unpopularity among the Muslims.

Next came the ill-fated movement of "Quit Kashmir" in 1946, into the genesis of which I need not go now. Then came the blood soaked partition of 1947 and withdrawal of British authority, while the National Conference leaders, including Pandit Kashyap Bandhu of Pandit Shamlal Saraf, were still in jail. This was followed by the tribal invasion of 1947 aided and abetted by Pakistan and the emergence internationally of what is called the 'Kashmir Problem", which is still alive causing irreparable damage to Kashmir, India and the minority community of Kashmiri Pandits. But when in 1948 political power was passed on to the National Conference under the leadership of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, Bandhuji was appointed Director, Cooperative Department. During this phase of his career I can claim that, as a leading Government functionary, he discharged his responsibilities with exemplary integrity and made a substantial contribution towards the development of our rural areas. During this period it was my good fortune to meet him socially on many occasions and I came to understand his political and social outlook with appreciation as also his understanding of the "Kashmir problems". Moreover, unlike the current huge crop of whole time politicians all over India, Bandhuji voluntarily sought rest and retirement in his native rural hamlet of Geru, Tahsil Badgam. The last occasion I met him was when Dr. S.N. Peshin and myself approached him, during his brief visit to Srinagar, with a request to address a gathering of K.P.'S at Shital Nath premises on Janam Ashtami; 1980. He did come to the meeting and advised us to generate what he called "Jana Shakti", under a united leadership. If there is any existence after death, let me close by praying for eternal peace to his spirit !

30 *Kashyap Bandhu - Through My Eyes*

Arjan Dev Majboor, Udhampur

Kashmiri Pandits have produced a galaxy of saints, writers, leaders and administrators, Sh. Bandhu ji is one of these luminaries. I have written about his early life and social reform movement in an Article in the Hindi section of the special issue of 'VITASTA', Calcutta brought out in his memory.

I would like to deal with his attainments in the field of journalism and his success and drawbacks in the field of politics in this piece.

In one of the issues of the famous Urdu Newspaper 'RANBIR' Sh. Mulk Rai Saraf, the fore-runner of journalism in J&K State says :-

"The pen of Kashyap Bandhu has shown its might I hope that he will achieve heights in the field of journalism in future".

Sh. Bandhu started writing when he was at Lahore. Lahore shaped him as a journalist and he remained connected with the Editorial Boards of the AKHBARI-AM", "AKHBARI KASHMIRI" and "BAHARI-KASHMIR", all Urdu papers. In the thirties of 20th century Sh. Bandhu was called to Kashmir by youth leaders of 'Yuvak Sabha' which later was named as-'Sanatan Dharma Yuvak Sabha'. Martand, the Urdu daily was started on 1st Feb.1931. Professor Abdul Qadir Sarwari, well known Urdu writer and author says in his book 'KASHMIR MAIN URDU.'-

"Martand" is among the oldest newspapers of the valley. It was published from 1931 to 1969 regularly, Kashyap Bandhu was the first Editor of "Martand". At Srinagar I have seen that this paper used to reach its subscribers early in the morning and was read with interest. "Martand", name was suggested by Sh. Gwasha Lal Koul. This paper published a weekly Adabi (Literary) edition also. According to famous Kashmiri poet Abdul Ahad Azad's Book '-KASHMIRI ZABAAN AUR SHAYIRI', Professor Devender Sateyarthi, a prominent folklorist wrote about famous Kashmiri Poet MAHJOOR, in the issue of 20th Magha 1991 (Bikrami) of the Martand. "Mahjoor's Persian poem - "Guli Veerana"-was published on 27th of Magh 1991 (1931 C.A.) in this paper. It is note-worthy that Professor Sarwari while writing his book- "Kashmir Main Urdu" - went for several months to Sheetalnath to study the old files of the daily Martand. While writing another book "Tareekhi Adbiyati-Kashmir", which remained incomplete, Professor Sarwari says that he has been benefitted by the files of "Martand" while collecting material for his book. Professor Sarwari further says :- "The contribution of the Martand is much more than other papers of the valley". According to Dr. Brij Premi, Sarwari met Sh. Kashyap Bandhu also in connection with his research work on literary history of Kashmir. This shows the capability of Bandhu Ji in establishing journalism in Kashmir. The editorials written by him were humourous as well as striking. Besides editorials, Bandhu Ji wrote "Chalant" and "Paagal Ki Diary" for a long period. Both these columns created waves among the readers. "Chalant" was a serious column and "Paagal Ki Diary", a humourous one. One of the topics of Chalant, for example was - "Banami Shukur Devta Northern District" - In this column Sh. Bandhu in a humourous way flays the Waziri Wazarat of Northern Division of the valley of Kashmir. He demands explanation from the official for not solving the common problems of the people.

After establishing "Martand" as a newspaper of importance Sh. Bandhu left it. This was due to his resignation from "Yuvak Sabha". The headline of the editorial of that day when he left Martand was "Tabdeeliy Qalb" (Change of heart).

Sh. Bandhu continued his journalistic pursuits and started the weekly "KESRI". Now he was quite free to show his forceful pen. He wrote freely against the establishment. Under the orders of Maharaja Hari Singh the publication of this famous paper was stopped in 1938. Sh. Bandhu did not stop, he started another weekly The "DESH" (Urdu). This weekly became popular throughout the State. The paper while highlighting the problems of common Kashmiris, wrote forceful editorials against the feudal rulers and the bureaucracy without any fear. I have personally seen Sh. Bandhu Ji on his desk in the office of the "Desh" at Aga Hamam in Srinagar. He would attend his office in a

Khadi Kurta and Dhoti. He wore big black rimmed spectacles and looked like a leader. Some of the Editorials of the prestigious weekly 'DESH' are as follows

1. Mohtarimoon Ki conference' (The conference of the respected)
2. The Land to the Tiller (Zameen Kisan Di)
3. K. C. S. Umedwaroon Kay Liay guess paper (A guess paper for the candidates of the K. C. S. candidates)
4. What is socialism?

Sh Bandhu joined National Conference after some time. He remained Editor of the daily "Khidmat" for a short period also.

While heralding various movements Sh. Bandhu was jailed many times by the then Government. The account of his being put behind bars is as follows

1. At Lahore he was jailed in connection with the "Sanders case".
2. In Roti agitation, which started at Jammu and Srinagar simultaneously, Bandhu was kept in jail from 1933 to 1934.
3. In 1946 he was arrested for taking active part in "Quit Kashmir Movement" but was released in 1947. The total period of his being in prison comes to 10 years.

Famous journalist Shri G. M. Sofi writes in an issue of "Srinagar Times" (Urdu Daily):

"Sh. Bandhu remained in jail for eight years during the period from 1931 to 1961. He remained in jail with Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah in Bhadarwah, Riyasi and Udhampur too."

Bandhu had a typical character. He was against feudal autocracy. He enjoyed simple life. His ideas were secular and he did not tolerate corrupt officers. When he became the Director General of "Dehat Sudhar Department" of J & K Govt, he introduced "Hal Sheeri", (Self help movement in the villages.)

As Director General of Dehat Sudhar Department he got built many roads like "Shopian Ahrabal Road, Nowpora Baba Rishi Road" and the roads leading to "Deb-Aakoora", "Toolamula" and "Ganderbal". He also established some horticulture nurseries.

In 1964 Sh. Kashyap Bandhu was appointed as Project Officer Sonawari in North Kashmir by the Sadiq Government. He completed the project in due course of time and this low land area which was prone to floods was made flood free and the yield of this area was doubled.

Bandhu ji could not spend a peaceful marital life. He remained generally away from his family. I have never seen his wife or his son with him. They rarely came to their home at Geeru.

His wife was posted at Jammu. I don't know the reasons behind their separation and , who was responsible for this between the couple.

Kashyap Bandhu could not do much in the field of politics when he took to Government service. He was a leader and a journalist and ought to have contributed in these areas -only. Loyalties changed in the National Conference. This Organisation could not fulfil the promises made in the document of 'Naya Kashmir'. There was no change in the working of bureaucratic set-up, which hampered the pace of the development of the state. The gangs created by some leaders made people angry and they remained off the movement. Corruption was high, especially during the period when Sheikh Abdullah took the reins of the state for the second time.

According to 10th February 1999 issue of 'Srinagar Times' when Bandhu Ji was asked about the power tussle of 1953, he said :-

"Upto 1948 all leaders of National Conference remained united; when power came into the hands of this organisation, the groupism started, which weakened the Movement. According to Bandhu Ji the Centre too was responsible for breaking the unity of the National Conference.

When Bandhu Ji retired from the post of the Project Officer, he never wished to come in power again. Whenever I met him he would complain about the functioning of the political system in the

state. He hated officials who fleeced the poor people. At a later stage he was disillusioned. He would talk to a Congressman in one tone and to a National Conference man in a different manner.

During his last years of life he devoted his whole time to reading and writing. He remembered hundreds of Urdu couplets, which he would use at proper occasion. His memory was sharp. He was proud of Indian culture especially of the Vedic Age.

I have seen him brooding and thinking on his bed in front of a table. He would hardly move out except for basking in the sun. He was pained to see communal clashes raising their ugly head in various parts of the country. Common people came to him; anyone who approached him for a recommendation was given a letter addressed to the concerned person. He took his meals at 8 p.m. in the evening. He was not fond of taking much tea. He relished milk, cheese and some sweets. Sh. Jagar Nath of Geeru used to get a thali of rice and vegetables for him, cooked from his own kitchen or from the kitchen adjacent to his sitting room. Sh. M. L. Bhat, Asstt. Registrar Co-operative Society Pulwama attended on Bandhu Ji for the last three years but at the time of Bandhu ji's death, he too was away.

Bandhu Ji had a couple of cows. He had engaged a villager to feed them. Milk and curds were always available at his place. He hardly attended feasts and parties. He reportedly wrote a history of his times which could unveil the ugly face of some politicians, if published. God knows as to who took the book after Bandhu Ji passed away. It is being said that the book was taken by his son and he was advised not to publish the book as it would give rise to controversies. I can't say whether it was true.

The tiger brand leader and journalist was now jailed in his own house. He was not in a happy mood always. Whenever I put him some questions, he would open his heart and talk without reservation for hours together. He even talked about one or two of his love affairs to me. He was beaten up by his own community people when he took an egg at a shop in his boyhood in their presence. These were the times in which he was brought up.

In his last years of life I have sometimes seen him living alone in his huge house. I even wrote to him as to how he lived lonely, while he had always a busy life during his earlier age. Like a freedom fighter he fought loneliness and tension. He was happy to receive any person who called upon him. His brother-in-law Sh. Gobind joo Razdan once told me that Bandhu Ji has written his autobiography and has kept a good sum for its publication. This could reveal many hidden comers of his life and the times he lived in. But the book did not come out. Nobody knows what happened to this book.

I sometimes wrote to him from my home in Kashmir and he would positively respond. On 23rd of March, 1979 he wrote a letter to me. The letter is important as it sheds light on his correct date of birth. The letter runs as follows

Geeru 23rd of March, 1979.

Dear Brother, May God bless you.

Tomorrow is my birthday. This is to say that I shall complete eighty years of my life and shall step up in eighty first year.

**"ZINDAGI TERAY LIAY MAIN NAY BAHUT RAQS KIYA,
ABH YEY HASRAT HAI KABHI TUJ KO NACHA KAY DEKHOON."**

'O life I danced for you a lot, now I want to see you dancing for sometime.'

Your letter in which you had written about the sad demise of your mother, reached me in time. While reading the letter, I thought for long. I felt that 100 to 110 years back two families were tied in a chain. I still remember my childhood when this chain was quite strong. The chain would jingle with a small push, thus there was some restlessness in the atmosphere. The jingling of the chain would

effect the atmosphere for a long time. Then a time came when only the chain would jingle but the push was so weak that it lost its sound.

At last the chain did not appear. Your mother was the last link of this chain, which was tied to our home : See that chain too has broken. I have heard my mother saying :-

"I was the daughter from that very home (Zainapora) I was the sister from that very home. I was some one of this very home."

My brother and his wife had been out of the state in December, when I read out your letter to them, they saw towards me with an empty mind and empty eyes. This has happened with the times. A forgotten story! A tasteless old book! Perhaps, some-time my mother would have said:-

**"YAAD AAEINGAY ZAMANAY KAY
MASHOQOON KAY LIAY
JAISAY FARSOODA KITABEAN
NOWJAWANOON KAY LIAY."**

"The times will be remembered by those who see towards it keenly, like the useless books for the young."

I could'nt write to you in time. Cold weakness, old age; all have crippled me. There is some warmth for the past two days. I am sitting in the Sun. I have to reply a bundle of twenty letters. The bundle is open and I am replying. What about your health? May God bless you.

Yours etc.

Sd/-

(Kashyap Bandhu)

In a letter in reply to one of my letters which reached him after a long time though the distance between Geeru and Zainapora is twenty Kilometers only. He wrote further that:

"The letter was delivered late to me, as every work is done at ease in this country after independence. So the letters are also received late.

In another letter he advised me to come to him along with my poems so that he could listen to these, for some time. He had also written to get my longer poem with me, which I had written in 1985.

On 18th December, 1985 when he was working as usual, his servant came and told him that his cows were not taking grass. He replied, "Now they won't eat it"; perhaps he wanted to say that their master was leaving the world this very day. In the evening at 8 p.m. this renowned journalist and leader of repute breathed his last at Geeru.

In the annals of Kashmir journalism and political history, Bandhu ji will be remembered for years to come. The coming generations will also remember him with reverence.

31 Kashyap Bandhu - My Childhood Recollections

M. K. Ogra, Calcutta

Kashyap Bandhu (original parental name Tarachand - pet childhood name Bulbul) was by his own right the greatest social reformer of our Kashmiri Pandit Community in the twentieth Century. He was the founder of the Sanatan Dharam Yuvak Sabha with its Head Quarter at Sheetalnath, Srinagar where also its mouth piece "The Daily Martand" started by Bandhuji was printed and published.

When I start recollecting my childhood memories and the history making events concerning our small community of Kashmiri Pandits, my mind unfolds very clear pictures of the deep imprints of the social reform movement. This well thought of movement was started by none other than the gentleman with a Kurta and Pyjama and the woolen chadder / shawl wrapped across his two shoulders who used to be a very frequent visitor to our house at Alikadal, Budhgare. He would address my mother by her parental name Sharika and my father Shivilal - name given by his in-laws.

This was as I later learnt due to the close bonds amongst the village folks of Geeru where my maternal Nani had hailed from. I recall my father very actively participating and taking upon himself leading roles in various reform programmes and movements. I also witnessed several large meetings being held, at our fourth floor hall (Kani) which could accommodate more than a couple of hundred people. After heated exchanges with participation from all active members coming from far and near places in the valley, decisions were taken to be implemented and carried out at grass root levels.

As time passed I distinctly remember several large meetings were held at "Bhana Bagh" a large vacant land belonging to the famous Sahaj Bhan family next to our house. Great personalities like Shiv Narayan Fotidar, Jialal Kilam, Amar Nath Kak, Zanardan Teng, Ganadal Wakil and several others were also frequent speakers at these meetings. What was happening or being discussed I can't recollect verbatim, but one distinct impression I carry that these meetings were all about Social reform process - Phiran v/s Saree for our ladies, dowry system Heut - Duet - huge wastages at langerkhanas and above all the widow marriage concept and last but not the least encouragement of women's education. Small processions in all localities would go round small and large lanes, house to house to spread the reform messages. Slogans and Verses in Kashmiri were very common and repeated in every household. Not only this, for the needy and the poor a system of collecting "Muchiphul" - one pot (Lungun) of rice was collected every month on a selected date from every Kashmiri Pandit house for this purpose.

As I grew into my teens I could see Sari as a dress for our ladies had become quite common. My mother rather convinced all the Ogra family ladies to change; though in winter months still some preferred Pheran to be fully wrapped up against chilly weather.

Again, as a regular visitor along with our mother, Masi and cousins in summer vacations to my Bada Matamal at Geeru (now known as Noorpur) in Avantipur district, we could see Bandhoji closely. His love for gardening and village life and its upliftment in his early days proved helpful to him as Panchayat and rural development Minister in Sheikh Abdullah's cabinet. A daughter-in-law must be educated and also Wari pass and Dhana pass must know kitchen gardening and good cooking this is what he is reported to have suggested to a middle man when a match was being looked for his nephew. I have seen him several times in his kitchen garden setting up plants, diverting water canals for irrigation and picking up vegetables etc.

I also recollect some photograph hanging on the walls of one of our bedrooms at Srinagar, with Kashyap Bandhu, Jialal Kilam and Prem Nath Kana and my father late Pt. Sambhu Nath Ogra escorted by two J & K turban policemen, due to their leading involvement in Roti Movement. A huge photograph of a large gathering at BHAN BAGH being addressed by Bandhoji was always a reminder of this great reform movement. "Martand" had taken the most premiere position as spokesman of our community problems. Editorials in this paper were being read between lines with great interest and enthusiasm. It was actually like food for the community and perhaps first time voice (popularly known as "ROTI MOVEMENT") was raised against oppression and discrimination

against Kashmiri Pandits, as a result of which Minority Commission, known as "Glancy Commission" was appointed by J & K Government to go into the details and submit recommendations. Every house would subscribe to a copy of "Martand" and eagerly await the early morning issue. Headlines and the editorial would become topic and gossip for the day. Editorial in 'MARTAND' during ROTI Movement was always censored. As a protest the editorial page was left blank with black border and in the blank page following lines were printed in bold letters

**"KHAMOSHI GUFTAGOO HAI
BEZUBAANI HAI ZABAAN MERI"**

While talking on 'MARTAND' many would recollect spending hours together upto midnight at Sheetal Nath eagerly and anxiously awaiting their final results of Matriculation examination of the Punjab University. This was the only Newspaper of those days in Kashmir to receive the results telegraphically from LAHORE.

After spearheading these historical movements like setting up of Sanatan Dharam Yuvak Sabha which was the only representative body of Kashmiri Pandits of J & K and setting up of Martand including a printing press of its own and above all the social reform movement, Bandhuji for reasons which I am unable to fathom joined the National Conference. It may be that the Congress led independence struggle and the Nationalist approach to problems changed his leanings.

My last meeting with Bandhuji was at his house at Karan Nagar along with my mother in Sept. 1949 after I passed my B.A. from J & K University. We were treated with all hospitality. After some talk of sweet memories of the past and her association with Geeru., my mother informed him about my graduation and asked him to suggest what I should do. He was very happy and embraced me, but if I remember well he could I not suggest any tangible proposal, since my emphasis was not on immediate employment, but I was more concerned to carry on my studies further. My father and my maternal uncle Pt. Gopikishen got angry with my mother because Bandhuji had gone over to National Conference without caring for what will happen to the organisation and to the reform movement he initiated.

I have dwelt on personal impressions and experiences of my early childhood and teenage days. At this time after nearly 50/60 years of these impressions, I can emphatically say that Bandhuji was perhaps the greatest reformer of our Community in J & K state. I cannot forget to mention another great reformer of our community Pt. Gopi Kishen Shivpuri (my mamaji) whom I had known very intimately as he was very affectionate and very fond of me. He had an intense zest and desire for reform and widow marriage and also refurbishing and repossession of our great Shrines and Pilgrimages which had either been repossessed or left uncared for. He started a reform movement, set up an organisation by the name "Samaj Sudhar Samiti" and also a daily newspaper "Jyoti". The organisation's Headquarter and the Jyoti publishing office was set up at Shiwala temple. In this movement I had seen involvement of youths including ladies taking leading roles; a fresh awakening came about which strengthened the bonds and some visible rethinking was set in motion. justice J.N. Bhatt, Pt. Shamlal Saraf, Pt. Keshav Nath Moza, Pt. Veda Lal Vakil, and Master Kashi Nath Kaul and my father and many leading personalities whose names I do not recollect now supported and joined this movement. When I talk of stalwarts who initiated and carried on the reform movement under the banner of Samaj Sudhar Samiti, I must mention here the pivotal role of Pt. Keshav Nathji Moza, a Mahatama by his nature, father of our Dr. B.K. Moza. Late Moza Sahib, popularly known as Bhai Gash stationed himself at Wir Bhawani temple to undertake the refurbishing of old Dharamsalas and construction of new Dharamsalas and beautification of the surroundings of this most respected and popular pilgrimage of Kashmiri pandits. Not only this temple but many other places of pilgrimage like Gautam Nag on way to Pahalgaoon also received personal care and attention of Moza Sahib. Another great person I remember at this juncture is Pt. Shreedhar joo Dhar for his selfless service to the cause of repair and reconstruction of this temple and other places of worship by cash and kind.

I have witnessed several widows marriages, many of which took places at Arya Samaj Bhawan at Karan Nagar and also at our house at Alikadal. Pt. Gopi Kishan succeeded to a large extent in bringing about the change in thinking and also in actual practice. This movement reunited the Community and actual implementation of well planned programme for dowry reform, feasting on lavish scales and "Heut Deut" was actively started with very good results. Some say that in present unsettled conditions our community marriages are celebrated with great pomp and show and the dowry system and the quantums are growing ; but alas ! there is no Bandhuji or Gopikishan to lead us for reform.

32 Kashyap Bandhu in the Light of Aatish-e-Chinar

Prithvi Nath Bhat, New Delhi

Late Sheikh Mohd. Abdullah has made many references to some prominent Kashmiri Pandits of his time in his famous autobiography, Aatsh-e-Chinar. Many of these Kashmiri Pandits joined his freedom struggle movement and his National Conference party. Among such persons was Pt. Kashyap Bandhu who was among the trustworthy lieutenants of the Sheikh.

Pt. Tarachand Bulbul alias Kashyap Bandhu was a very sagacious and farsighted person. He was a great freedom fighter, social reformer, administrator, journalist and poet. People of all walks of life called him Bandhuji and this name was later adopted by one and all as a mark of respect and love. He was born of Pt. Thakur Joo at village Geru on 24th March 1899.

After returning from Lahore, Bandhuji came into contact with Sh. Jia Lal Kilam, Sh. Shew Narayan Fotedar, Sh. Premnath Bazaz, Sh. Damodar Bhat (Hanjoora) and others who were of his age and had the same zest and zeal to work unitedly for the good of the Kashmiri Pandit community. Bandhuji had studied minutely the Pandit society and its social evils. So Sanatan Dharam Yuvak Sabha was formed at Sheetal Nath in 1930 AD under his presidentship. This committee took upon itself the crusade against dowry system, lavish expenditure on marriages and other rituals, long and dreary Pherans and tarangas (woman folk headgear) etc. The committee advocated widow marriage, use of Saris by women folk and spread of education among KP girls. This movement gained momentum in cities, towns and villages. It did a lot good those days to the community. Schools for girls were opened and education among females was spread with great enthusiasm. Woman's Welfare trust Srinagar was a glaring example in this direction. In 1931 Martand paper was brought out and Bandhuji was its first editor.

In 1931 AD. Muslim Conference was formed in Srinagar, Sheikh Mohd. Abdullah who had returned to Srinagar after doing his M. Sc., became its first President. Thus Conference fought against the Dogra rule for the rights and privileges of Kashmiri Muslims. Maharaja Hari Singh was the Dogra ruler of Jammu and Kashmir State at that time. It was a surprise for the ruler to his majority community subjects rising against his autocratic rule. Sheikh Mohd. Abdullah was arrested. Later the Maharaja appointed Glancy Commission to look into the grievances of the people of the State. Pt. Premnath Bazaz was its member on behalf of the K. P. Community.

Sheikh Mohd. Abdullah felt that his struggle for just rule will be incomplete without the participation of Kashmiri Pandits and Hindu Dogras of Jammu. So in June 1932, he along with Gh. Ahmad Ashai (later in 1949 he became the first Registrar of the university of Kashmir) met Kashyap Bandhu at Alikadal in the house of Pt. Ramchand Koul Banikar and discussed the idea of a united movement against the Dogra rule. Though Bandhuji accepted this idea in principle but he expressed his inability to rope in all K. P.s into such a movement at that point of time. However, Bandhuji, Premnath Bazaz and Shamlal Saraf etc. joined the Muslim Conference to prevent raids on K. P. community in Kashmir by Muslim zealots who held the former responsible for atrocities committed on them on 13th July 1931.

Bandhuji and other K. P. leaders had started Roti Agitation against the report of Glancy Commission. Its main demands were :- (1) Free land distribution for cultivation, (2) Scholarships for professional and industrial trainings and, (3) Financial aid to start industrial and other units.

In 1938 AD. elections for the Jammu & Kashmir Praja Sabha were held. All the 19 candidates of Muslim Conference were elected. Shiv Narayan Fotedar who had by then become all in all of the Yuvak Sabha, was instrumental in getting J. L. Kilam's and Bandhuji's candidate Pt. Damodar Bhat, defeated and instead he (Shiv Narayan Fotedar) and Amar Nath Kak were elected its members from K. P. community. Pt. Prem Nath Bazaz and Kashyap Bandhu turned to Muslim Conference and joined hands with Sheikh Mohd. Abdullah. They were signatories to the demand of responsible self-government. Sheikh Mohd. Abdullah formed a committee to frame the demands of self government.

The following were its members under the presidentship of Gh. Mohd Sadiq, Mirza Mohd. Afzal Beg, Pt. Jia Lal Kilam, Pt. Kashap Bandhuji, Pt. Premnath Bazaz and Sardar Budh Singh. The national demands of self rule were passed unanimously on 27th Aug. 1938 before a very big crowd at Hazratbal, Srinagar in which Bandhuji and other K. P. leaders addressed the crowd for the first time on Muslim Conference platform. Those who signed the demands for self-rule included Bandhuji, Prenmath Bazaz, Jia Lal Kilam, Sham Lal Saraf and Dr.S. N. Peshin.

On the arrest of Sheikh Mohd. Abdullah on 29th Aug. 1938, Bandhuji and others made fiery speeches at Azad Park (later K. M. D. Bus Stand) Srinagar against the Sheikh's arrest. Bandhuji and others were arrested the same night.

It will be pertinent to mention here that after, cutting off relations with Sanatan Dharam Yuvak Sabha, Bandhuji resigned from the editorship of Martand. He started his own paper Kesri in Urdu. Kesri was banned by the government in 1938 for writing against Dogra Maharaja. Pt. Sham Lal Saraf was president of Kashmir Hindu Progressive Party. Pt. Prem Nath Bazaz had started Hamdard Urdu weekly in 1935 AD. along with Maulana Mohd. Syed Masoodi under the patronage of Sheikh Mohd. Abdullah.

In Feb. 1939 Bandhuji along with other leaders was released from jail. Soon after, a special convention of Muslim Conference was convened at Pathar Masjid Srinagar on 10th and 11th June 1939. In this convention Muslim Conference was dissolved and resolution of the formation of Jammu and Kashmir National Conference adopted unanimously. It was necessitated to make the party broad-based and to open it for the entry of non-Muslims of the state. Bandhuji was made a member of the first working committee of National Conference along with Prem Nath Bazaz etc. Earlier in March 1939 Bandhuji along with Sheikh Mohd. Abdullah and others had participated in All India National Congress Annual Convention at Tripura, which was addressed by Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru and other prominent leaders of India.

In April 1940 at Id Miladun Nabi day celebrations Sheikh Mohd. Abdullah made such a religious speech that sentiments of Hindus were hurt. As a result Pt. Jia Lal Kilam, Bandhuji and Premnath Bazaz strongly protested against it. Bandhuji and Jai Lal Kilam were so enraged that both of them resigned from National Conference. But Rushid Taseer writes in Twarikh-e-Hurriyat Kashmir (pages 90-99 vol II) that Pt. Nehru was invited by Sheikh Mohd. Abdullah to visit Kashmir on 29th May 1940. Bandhuji objected and asked Sheikh Sahib with whose permission he had invited Pt. ji. It caused commotion and differences surfaced. As a result Kilam and Bandhuji resigned from National Conference.

In June 1943 Pt. Shiv Narayan Fotedar, Pt. Jia Lal Kilam and Bandhuji rejoined National Conference and were again made members of its working committee.

In 1942 Prime Minister of Jammu and Kashmir State Sh. Gopala Swamy Ayyangar resigned due to differences with Maharaja Hari Singh. Pt. Ramchand Kak was made the Prime Minister. He was the first Kashmiri Pandit to rise to this position after about 600 years. He had joined the state as librarian and rose to this position by dint of hard work and intelligence. The government had appointed two Kashmiri Muslim Praja Sabha members as ministers of the state. Due to the efforts of Bandhuji who had proximity to the Prime Minister, Gh. Mohd. Sadiz and Mirza Mohd. Afzal Beg were made ministers. But due to differences on policy matters Beg Sahib resigned soon. Kashmiri Pandits at the behest of Muslim leaders framed a ten point chargesheet against R. C. Kak. Bandhuji too was asked to sign it but he refused. Sheikh Mohd. Abdullah called Bandhuji to Mujahid Manzil. He was again asked to sign the chargesheet, he refused again. Sheikh Sahib lost his temper and asked Bandhuji to get lost. Bandhuji was dismissed from the membership of N. C. He was also removed as editor of the Diety Khidmat-an official organ of the National Conference. It was called on agent of R. C. Kak. This incident has no mention in Aatish-e-Chinar.

In 1946 National Conference started Quit Kashmir Movement. Bandhuji was again admitted into National Conference on 20th May of that year. He was sent to R. C. Kak to enquire if Sheikh Sahib

was to be arrested who was scheduled to go to Delhi next day via Rawalpindi. R. C. Kak confided in Bandhuji and told him that the Sheikh would be arrested before reaching Domail. Bandhuji returned with this message and went straight to Mujahid Manzil where the Sheikh was waiting. Next day Sheikh Sahib was arrested at Ghari. Bandhuji also was arrested that very night along with many other leaders of the party. He, Sardar Budh Singh and Gh. Nabi Vakil alias Nab ji of Anantnag who later became Governor of Kashmir and thereafter Speaker of the Legislative Assembly were sent to Riasi jail. Sheikh Sahib who was first lodged in Bahu Fort Jammu, was later shifted to Riasi jail (Tarikhe Hurriyat Kashmir).

Due to scorching heat Sheikh Sahib, Bandhuji, Nabi ji and Mirza Afzal Beg were shifted to Bhadarwah jail.

Many earthquakes rocked the state that year. The prisoners had to be moved to an open area where they passed one month in a tent. Bandhuji was entrusted with keeping accounts of rations etc. which they got from the jail authorities. Bandhuji used to save the rations and sold that in the market through a jail employee. Also he bought cigarettes for Bandh ji who was a chain smoker those days. He had collected about seventy packets of cigarettes which were detected by Sheikh Sahib. Bandhuji wanted to sell the packets after smoking as many he could. Sheikh Sahib wrote that Bandhuji was a strict vegetarian and cooked his food himself. He performed Sandhya daily.

Before partition of India in August 1947, there were communal riots of unimaginable magnitude throughout the length and breadth of India. Thousands of people were massacred ruthlessly, women, young and old were raped, even children were not spared, lakhs of people moved from one dominion to the other. There was chaos and anarchy everywhere. R. C. Kak was asked by the Maharaja to resign and his maternal uncle Gen. Janak Singh replaced him. R. C. Kak was imprisoned in Central Jail Srinagar.

Due to the dithering policy of the Maharaja regarding accession to either of the dominions, Pakistan instigated tribals to raid the state. The tribals were aided by the Pakistan army. This news reached Srinagar. In the mean time Bimber, Kotli, Mirpur, Rajouri and Ponch were hit by communal riots. Gandhi ji advised Maharaja Hari Singh to release Sheikh Sahib as he alone could save Kashmir from burning. He was released from Badamibagh on 29th Sept. 1947 after being shifted from Bhadarwah jail. He had an audience with the Maharaja before his release where he was apprised of the latest situation.

Soon after his release all other political prisoners were released from jails. Bandhuji also was released from Bhadarwah.

On 21st October 1947 tribals with the active help of Pakistan army raided the state. Sheikh Mohd. Abdullah was appointed as Chief Administrator of the State. Like many other N. C. workers, Sheikh Sahib appointed Bandhuji as Emergency Relief and Rehabilitation Officer of Pulwama.

When raiders were thrown out by the Indian army and normalcy was restored in the state after U. N. resolution of Cease Fire, people's government with Sheikh Mohd Abdullah as Prime Minister was formed. Bandhuji was appointed as Director General of Dehat Sudhar Department. Rural development, Panchayats, cooperative, agriculture and animal husbandry departments of the state were put under his charge. He did a very commendable job and brought back all the departments on the right track after the devastation wrought by tribal raiders.

On 9th August 1953, Sheikh Mohd. Abdullah was arrested at Gulmarg and Bakshi Ghulam Mohd. took over as Prime Minister of the State. Bandhuji protested against this action and was arrested and sent to different jails of Udhampur, Kud etc. Bakshi tried his best to win him over to his side but Bandhuji stuck to his guns and declined his offer.

In 1958 Bandhuji was released from Kud jail along with Sheikh Sahib. He did not join any political party and remained silent. Bakshi Sahib was removed from his office in 1964 under the Kamraj plan. Gh. Mohd. Sadiq took over in his place as head of the State government. He appointed Bandhuji as Project Officer Sonawari but Sheikh Mohd. Abdullah writes in Aatish-e-Chinar on page

733 that Bakshi Gh Mohd. was successful in winning over Bandhuji, Gh. Mohd. Chikan, Mir Gh. Rasool and Mohd. Amin Abiguzar, because they had lost courage and tolerance to face the trauma and harassment of investigation agencies. According to him they accepted the jobs they had been removed from after their arrest in 1953. But Sh. A. D. Majboor in his article on Kashap Bandhu in Hamara Adab of Cultural Academy Srinagar writes after interviewing Bandhuji that he declined to yield to Bakshi and did not accept any of his offers in the government. According to him Bandhuji was appointed Project Officer Sonawari in 1964.

Bandhuji proved a good administrator and changed the shape of Sonawari into Sonawari-land of gold. Floods no more wrought havoc, bumper paddy and other crops year after year bettered the economic condition of the farmers and they no longer were hunger and poverty stricken.

Bandhuji edited three news papers in Kashmir after returning from Lahore. First he was the editor of Martand which was the official organ of Sanatan Dharam Yuvak Sabha Srinagar. He later started his own news paper Kesri which was banned by Maharajas government in 1938 for writing against the Dogra rule. Then he started Desh in 1938 that he continued upto 1967. During his stay at Lahore he was the editor of Arya Gazette.

It is said that Bandhuji had written his autobiography. Who knows where it is?

Bandhuji died on 10th December 1985 at the age of 86 years after a brief illness at his house in Geru village. At that time none of his members of family was present there to shed a few tears.

Sheikh Mohd. Abdullah used to visit that great freedom fighter after assuming power in 1974. He had great regard for him and valued his views and advice.

References :

- (1) Aatish-e-Chinar
- (2) Tarikh-e-Hurriyat Kashmir
- (3) Hammara Adab

33 Gairoo Kaa Akeyla Shiv

Dr. Rajiv Kumar, Jammu

[Courtesy : The Kashmir Times, Jammu.]

[Pandit Kashyap Bandhu's paper The Weekly Desh carried an article "Panzeth ka akeyla Shiv" in early forties, The article has not been gone through but the grand old man used to discuss the spirit behind that writing. An effort has been made to remodel the commentary with an eye on the pathetic condition of the Pandit community as on date. Twelfth death anniversary of the doyen of Kashmiri leadership was on December 18, 1997.]

It was the autumn of the year 1934, Pandit Sat Lal, an official of the Co-operative Department was going on official business, towards village Panzeth in Devsar Pargana (Kashmir). Feeling the chill, he tightened his robes around himself and wondered as to why winter had decided to set in early that year. This made him think of many requirements back home which needed to be attended to for making up the winter stocks. He was making mental readjustments of his budget, but failing to get anywhere he heaved a deep sigh and looked skywards as if complaining. The path passed through paddy fields where peasants were busy thrashing the crop. So, not much heed was paid to the visitor. While nearing the village, a particular sight made him to stop in his tracks. On the bank of the stream by the side of the path was seated a Shiv Lingam. All alone, unattended. No flowers, no Dhoop-Dip, nothing was there. This Shiva seemed to be seated in the wilderness. Pandit Sat Lal before approaching the Lingam took off his shoes, washed his hands and then sat in front. Instead of praying or reciting any verses, he found himself talking to the Lingam. All the thoughts of his domestic problems welled back. Tears rolled down his eyes while communicating with the Shiva. In spite of the fact that he was amongst the first graduates from the valley and definitely the first from his village Gairoo, he had succeeded in getting only a measly job in the Cooperative Department. He had suffered innumerable hardships in getting himself educated. His father as well as his uncles were illiterate peasants who had toiled day in and day out in getting him and his brothers educated. Economically, the family lived a poor man's life.

Grandfather of Pt. Sat Lal was nick-named Vaas Bhat Garib, because he could not produce two Annas needed to be paid to the Maharaja's revenue collector and had to be penalised by making him stand in chilling cold stream for hours during the winter month of Magh until one gentleman took pity on the fellow, loaned him the royal sum of two Annas and called him Vaas Bhat Garib. The nickname continued through the generations inspite of the fact that the loan had been liquidated by the old man himself. Now Pt. Sat Lal was complaining to Shiva of Panzeth as to why he could not get a better job. He was more bitter because his elder brother in spite of becoming a well-known social reformer and commanding very high regard amongst the Maharaja's Administration had not been of much help in promoting his career. Pt. Sat Lal spoke his heart out to the Shiv Lingam for quite a long time and after some time he felt like being consoled. He drew solace from the fact that it was not his fate alone but his whole Biradari was sailing in the same boat. Most of his school mates had also got equivalent jobs although academically well qualified. The Kashmiri Pandit community was a helpless, friendless and misunderstood community.

Years passed by, Pt. Sat Lal retired from the Government service. The land that the forefathers cultivated had been distributed amongst the landless. His elder brother was named Pt. Kashyap Bandhu (Kashmiris' brother) by a grateful community having played a very crucial, timely and result oriented innings in the sociopolitical area of the State, but had returned to his ancestral home at Gairoo, materially empty handed. Therefore, the youngsters in the family were encouraged in getting in to the service for taking care of their livelihood.

The year was 1985. Against it was autumn. The grandson of Pt. Sat Lal visited village Payyar near Pulwama in connection with official work. He felt the chill not only in the air but within his soul too. He had come to the village very early in the morning, therefore the feeling of chill. And he was mentally upset too. He had taken a stand quite against the wishes of the Cabinet Minister in-charge of

his Department. The Minister having failed to browbeat him had issued orders for his transfer to a far off place in Ladakh. This had upset the planning of the youngster besides causing a heavy economic burden. Lost in the chilling thoughts, he was led to a space in the middle of the village. Lo and behold there appeared an ancient temple in the middle of a fenced area. The structure was built of grants, with a tall pedestal upon which was seated a beautiful Shiv Lingam under a canopy. Eleven steps needed to be climbed from the ground to reach the Lingam. The young fellow was overwhelmed by the site. Took off his shoes and went up the steps to become very much upset because the Shiva was seated all alone and unattended. None of his devotees lived in the village. The youngster felt deeply touched, sat down and began talking to the Shiv Lingam- a la grandfather style. He poured out his heart to the Shiva. Tried to find answers to the question that arose in his mind, as to why was it that inspite of doing well academically and belonging to a well known family he had not landed in a good job. That inspite doing well in the Department he had to go to a far-flung place in Ladakh for duty. That why was it that he would not be in a position to provide physical services even to his grandparents back home, material support he could never afford. The Shiv Ling sat there listening to his tale of woes and when the youngster's heart was lightened he started realising that many of his colleagues from the same community were treated worse than him. He realised that the community as such was as helpless and friendless even under the democratic set up as it was during the Maharaja's rule. And the Shiva of Payyar was as lonely as was the Shiva of Panzeth.

Time rolled on. The grand old man Pt. Kashyap Bandhu breathed his last all alone in his house at Gairoo soon after the grandson had reported for duty in Ladakh. Therefore, the whole community had to suffer the pain of the wounds inflicted on it in 1986. The Pandits wept, the Gods wept so did the empty house of Vaas Bhat Garib of Gairoo. But there was a silver lining. The Shiv Ling on the bank of the stream flowing by the side of the house was being kept cheerful by pouring of large quantities of water and milk by the village ladies each morning.

This particular Shiv Ling was also seated on the bank of this small stream since time immemorial. Then Pandit Kashyap Bandhu, gearing up his resources and energies during his very old ago got a small temple constructed wherein this Shiv Ling was installed with much fanfare.

Then came 1990. The Shiva was left alone. The house of Pt. Kashyap Bandhu was set on fire. It burnt down as silently as did the inheritors bear the pain of losing their moorings. The pain of loss of the nest was not as severe as was the pain of loss of faith. The people whom Pt. Kashyap Bandhu had nourished had not only plundered his nest but had burnt all bridges with the principles he stood for.

The Kashmiri Pandit community is as helpless and friendless today as never before. Although forced to leave their homes they have been named migrants. The ship is as rudderless as never before. The destination is not in sight. Turning the pages of history one finds that the sun had set on the glories of the community in 1339 AD itself, with the fall of Kota Rani at Inderkote. In came Sikander- the idol breaker. He put thousands to sword, made lakhs to flee. Then came Khokha Khan the mere mention of whose name frightens the children into silence even today. The rape and plunder of 1947 need not be mentioned.

But then again there is a silver lining. We also find a Badshah in the history acting as a healer for the wounds inflicted by Sikander. We also find Abdul Qudoos Gojwari risking his life to save the family of Birbal Dhar from the wrath of the Afghan ruler. We also find Maqbool Sherwani getting himself crucified but rising against the tyranny,

History has to repeat itself. There has to be another Badshah- when and where, only the Shiva knows. But meanwhile the Shiva of Gairoo is as Akeyla as was the Shiva of Payyar and the Shiva of Panzeth. He is awaiting the return of his devotees for his usual offerings of water and milk.

34 Pandit Kashyap Bandhu - Social Reformer

Bhavanesh Kaul, Jammu

Pandit Kashyap Bandhu (Tara Chand of Gairu, Noorpur village) not only played a vital role as an astute politician, along with Sardar Budh Singh, in that he laid the firm foundation of the local ethos Kashmiriyat known popularly now as secularism thereby strengthening the bonds with rest of India even before partition in converting Muslim Conference into National Conference.

Simultaneously he devoted his time and attention to the welfare of his Baradari where he perceived decadence creeping in the social structure. To arrest this trend he worked for the rejuniation of noble heritage prevalent in the Baradari social structure. As a social reformer he initiated epoch making reforms viz. Female education, Widow Remarriage and change over to Saree as a dress for women- this to give them larger identity with other Hindu women all over India. The men folk having already worn similar dress as worn by men of office going class all over the country. He, besides, worked hard for revival of customs and rituals that were in vogue in Baradari social structure. These earlier practices created bonds of kinship in the community.

Inspite of the fact that essentially, by and large, Kashmiri Pandits in the valley had hand to mouth living and belonged to lower middle class, they paid maximum emphasis to education. Consequently the bulk of low paid jobs, teachers, clerks, post men, peons, forest guards, patwaris etc. were held by them. Such limited financial strength led to simple living and high thinking. This resulted in what is known now, in common parlance, as sort of Socialist Pattern of society. There were no beggars in the community because of having evolved a rich tradition of ATHAROUT and MOCHIPHOL. In every household a separate DEAG (large earthen container was kept for this purpose and when the lady of the house took out rice to cook for meals a LUNGUN (Wooden measure) full was put into this Deag. At fixed intervals volunteers came to collect this separate stored rice from each house and distributed the same among the real SAFEAD POSH members of the Baradari, thus preventing the humiliation of begging and helped to maintain human dignity. Pandit Kashyap Bandhu worked hard to revive this healthy custom and such other traditions of yore, to help the poorest amongst poor to lead respectful life with dignity.

After the demise of a family member on 10th Day KRIYA ritual, relatives, neighbours and friends would collect at the Bathing Ghat and then follow the bereaved member to his house. He would enter his house and immediately come out head covered, wearing a "PHERAN" (later a long Kurta) walk up and down the narrow passage made by the people standing on both sides. Each one would put some money, depending on the closeness of relationship with the bereaved member, into the Pheran pocket. No one would know who contributed what and the receiver would also never know about such individual contributions. This helped the bereaved family to perform 10th and 11th day Kriyas of feeding and feasting of GURUJIS; without the feeling of strain of expenses involved and need to borrow. This applied to all high and low and was an obligatory gesture of togetherness and uniformity.

Similarly, when there was a marriage in the family, the relations, neighbours, friends offered sums of money, depending on the closeness of relationship called "GULIMUTH" to the head of the family. "VURBAL" was another helpful custom, when during a wedding, affordable contributions were made by all invited guests. This added to a decent amount in the prevailing joint family system then. Again, it was obligatory for all irrespective of the financial status. Such warm gestures developed bonds of partnership in happiness and incidentally saved the lower groups from the clutches of money lenders.

Only vegetarian food was served to the Baraat, since Kanyadaan was in progress according to Sanatan Dharm rites. The bride grooms' party made their own arrangements of serving KEHWA with special KULCHAS, to all those who stayed back for the entire wedding ceremony. As per old tradition, only young girls, younger than the bride groom would be part of the Baraat, then the bride grooms were also younger in age. All such healthy traditions considerably eased, the financial burden

of the brides' parents. In days of yore "GHAR ACHUN" did not necessarily immediately follow the wedding. This ritual would follow later at a convenient date and some occasion to the girls' parents it was simple a close family affair and had some meaning too since it would be sort of a formal introduction amongst the bride grooms' party, more so the older ladies, who did not form part of the Baraat.

Bandhuji saw certain unhealthy trends creeping into our customs and traditions and taking alarming proportions gradually, as a result of DEKHA DEKHI. Each wanting to outdo the other, totally detrimental for the welfare of the community. Shri Bandhuji had the vision of seeing this sorry state of affairs developing, if immediate action was not taken. He wanted us to shun wasteful expenditure on festivities, shun dowry system etc. But unfortunately Bandhuji could not devote full time to these social problems and ensure the old simple and dignified traditions to take firm roots. Since he was involved with epoch making reforms in the political area of those momentous days; ensuring Muslim Conference change over to National Conference with secular, socialistic and democratic constitution.

In today's social fabric of the Baradari these unhealthy trends have assumed Himalayan heights and with no end in sight. The tendency now seems to be to copy, add, mix and multiply practices from other Hindu communities of the country. Today we see Baraats coming with bands, gaslights, fire works and at this rate Bhangra is not far off followed by MILNI. Already "JAIMALA" ceremony is added followed by old practice of "DWAR PUJA".

Again, there have been instances of non-vegetarian food being served with Baraatis. What is more alarming is the core group of Baraatis are separately entertained to hard drinks and a variety of special snacks, Fried Fish, Shami kababs, chicken tikkas, cheese pakoras etc. The bulk of the rest of Baraatis before the meal are served kehwa, tea, coffee, soft drinks with large assortment of sweets and savouries. Obviously, all this adds to the financial strain of brides party more so the lower income group and is totally contrary to the old dignified and uniform affordable heritage.

The old practice of going firm on the alliance, arranged marriages, there used to be a convenient practice of "KATH BAAT" held in a third party house, known to both parties. There the brides party would serve ..."MACHCHUT" to a small group of grooms, male relatives and a token exchange of flowers. Then the formal "GANDUN" would follow. In this the grooms' party would send "TILAK", a bridal dress, engagement ring and "NABADNOT" and dry fruit. The brides parents would reciprocate with engagement ring, suit piece for the groom, "NABADNOT" and dry fruit. It was just this and no more. Now the same ritual is celebrated, in hotels over lavish entertainment, and large retinue of grooms' party invited. Expensive "HEUTDEUT" and gifts are exchanged.

There is now no relevance to "GHARACHUN" ritual, since ladies of even grandmother vintage, now accompany the Baraat. And this ritual has become obligatory now, and follows immediately the wedding by both parties. This present day practice is a glaring extravaganza involving vulgar exhibition of affluence.

The old ritual of "MATIMUR" has again no relevance now since the would be brides move in and out of the grooms' house. Earlier the bride would be much younger and would be formally seen by the mother-in-law, by lifting her veil and for this a token gift was presented to the mother-in-law, as a gesture of warm regard. But now this has been stretched to cover all ladies of the grooms' household. Similarly, gift of "Targa" and "KHRAU" later changed to saree and sandals) as "KALAVALEUN" has also been stretched, multiplied many fold and covers larger group of ladies. A simple affordable 'gift "SHANDKER" to "POPH" for guiding a much younger and sort of innocent bride to her bridal chamber. This ritual has no relevance now in the present day scenario, besides involves more expensive gifts.

The present day practice of performance of "YAJNOPAVIT" just before the wedding, when grooms are full fledged working young men; is in total variance with the religious significance, this was performed before the boy entered teenage group, as is still prevalent amongst Bengalis, Maharashtrians, Tamil Nadu Brahmins. Today this ceremony has been reduced to a farce as a friend

succinctly remarked that this is so now being held just before the wedding, only to ensure receiving a "GOLDYONIA" (chain) and other expensive gifts, a big financial strain on the brides' parents.

Recently I was a member of a typical present day Kashmiri Pandit Baraat party, along with a Delhi resident, a common friend. I was feeling terribly dejected to witness the vast spectacle of wasteful extravaganza and vulgar display of affluence trying to tease me out of my deep dejection, the friend cynically remarked. "you MIGRANTS never had it so good. You get Salary / Pension from the state exchequer, also collect Central Government DOLE and most of you are, besides, gainfully employed also. No wonder you can spend so lavishly on these occasions."

This total indifference towards the old, rich and noble heritage by the Baradari is really deplorable. We have thus not only forgotten the plea of Great Reformer Shri Bandhuji but also are totally betraying him. Some time back through the columns of KOSHUR SAMACHAR, monthly publication of Kashmir Samiti of Delhi, our esteemed learned scholar and renowned teacher, Prof. S. L. Pandit pleaded with the Baradari to think and ponder over these unhealthy trends developing in our social fabric, to the detriment of the welfare of the community, more so when the Baradari is uprooted and scattered all over. Sane timely advice in keeping with the memory of Pandit Kashyap Bandhuji.

35 Pandit Kashyap Bandhu - Some Reminiscences

R. K. Kak, Jammu

[Reproduced from Martand dated 10th Jan. 1986]

[Shri R. K. Kak is the doyen of journalist fraternity in Kashmir. He is the living monument of the history of Kashmir since 1931, and has had close contacts with all Kashmir leaders, including Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad, Mirza Azal Beg, Maulana Masoodi, Mir-Waiz Maulana Yustif Saha, Pandit Prem Nath Bazaaz, Pandit Prem Nath Dogra, Pandit Kashyap Bandhu, Sardar Budh Singh, and Pt. Jia Lal Kilam. He personally knew and covered Mahatma Gandhi, Pandit Nehru, Maulana Azad, Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, Mr. M. A. Jinnah, and Pandit Ram Chandra Kak, who was Prime Minister of J & K during a very crucial period of Kashmir History-Editor.]

In the morning of December 18 last, I sent a letter to Pandit Kashyap Bandhu on his village home address-Noorpur (Geru) Tral- in which I had sought some information from him on one or two points regarding his role in State politics. But late at night when a common friend telephoned me that Bandhuji had breathed his last, I was stunned. I felt that another stalwart of the political movement in Kashmir had passed away to the dismay of many. The entire picture of the eventful career of the khadi-clad, bespectacled Bandhuji came before my mind's eye and I felt sad that another distinguished freedom fighter, who represented the composite culture of Kashmir, had departed.

In September last when I met him at Noorpur, he could not at first recognize me even though I had revealed my identity on entering his room. He was resting on his cot after lunch. "Come nearer", he told me in Kashmiri. And when I did so, he embraced and kissed me and said, "My eyesight has become very weak; it is, therefore, that I did not at first recognize you. I had consulted Dr. Manzoor, but he advised me against undergoing another eye operation at this advanced age lest I should lose my eyesight altogether".

After these remarks, Bandhuji suddenly had a hearty laugh and said in English "I am now aged 87". There was a short pause and he again burst into laughter. "I am going to live a hundred years". he said humorously. But I could sense "that in this remark" of his there was a subtle satire on himself. His companions were his books and newspapers which he occasionally read in spite of his very weak eyesight. He felt some sort of loneliness in his old age though his relatives and Muslim and Hindu neighbours tried to give him company and make him feel as comfortable as possible.

Bandhuji's Muslim neighbours, who lived with one another in leading me to his house, were also sitting in the room on the ground floor where he (Bandhuji) was chatting with me. Turning to them, he said, "A dear friend has come to see me after a long time. Bring some cold water from the well and some walnuts for him." In a twinkling of the eye, three young men stood up and in a few minutes they brought a tumbler of ice-cold water for me. This was followed by fresh walnuts on a plate. Then came a hot cup of tea.

"It is good that you have come", Bandhuji said looking towards me.

"The credit for it goes to the late Sheikh Sahib (Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah)". I replied. Bandhuji felt a little surprised and asked me the how and why of it.

I explained to him that a few months before his death when Sheikh Sahib and I were engaged in a lively conversation at his residence, I asked him about your first meeting with him (Sheikh Sahib). Sheikh Sahib told me in reply that I could meet you and get detailed information.

On hearing this, Bandhuji first fell into a reflective mood and then said:

"I was greatly upset when I read in the newspapers at Lahore about the firing in Central Jail, Srinagar, on July 13, 1931, and the events that had followed it. I decided to come back to Kashmir, but it took me a few days to pack up as I had several engagements and commitments in Lahore. I reached Srinagar early in August, 1931. I was very sad at what had happened in the land of Lal Ded and

Sheikh Noorud-Din, the two great saint-poets who had shown the correct path to the people of Kashmir. I wanted to meet Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah in order to discuss things with him. But since I had not till then known Sheikh Sahib personally, the meeting could not take place in 1931. Eventually, I contacted the late Khwaja Ghulam Ahmed Ashai who was a friend of mine, it was through Ashai Sahib that Sheikh Sahib and I met in 1932 in the house of late Pandit Hara Koul at Ali Kadal. We had a long discussion on forming a joint front. Towards the end of our discussions, Sheikh Sahib, who agreed with the proposal, told me to wait for some time since he (Sheikh Sahib) faced certain difficulties.

After hearing this from Bandhu I asked him what sort of a leader according to him, Sheikh Sahib was. Pat came the reply in English; "His conscience was Muslim, his heart was Kashmiri and his brain was secular". After saying this, Bandhuji became silent and closed his eyes for a minute or so. I, therefore, asked him in a loud voice as to why he had become so quiet suddenly. He replied in a voice filled with remorse; You have talked of Sheikh Sahib whom I loved very much. I was just recollecting the days I had spent with him inside and outside the jails in Jammu and Kashmir".

Pandit Kashap Bandhu resigned from the Yuvak Sabha, of which he was a leading light, in 1935. Before resigning from the Sabha, he told a public meeting : "The Yuvak Sabha has either shrunk so much that I cannot be accommodated in it, or I have swollen so much that I cannot find a place in this organization. I am, therefore, bidding good-bye to the Sabha."

Pandit Kashap Bandhu was an orator par excellence. He could build rapport with his audience in no time. He spoke fluently in Kashmiri and Hindi. Once when he developed differences with some leaders of the Yuvak Sabha, he appeared on the platform and began his speech with the words : "Today, I am standing before you as an accused....." Thousands of people, who had gathered to hear him immediately shouted "No, No you are not an accused....." I was witnessing the scene at some distance and felt surprised that this man could move an audience like that and so quickly.

In the communal riot of 1932 in Srinagar, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah played a conspicuous role in controlling the situation. And when he and Pandit Kashap Bandhu addressed a joint public meeting in the city, the latter began his speech in Kashmiri by saying: "My head hangs in shame when I see that in this land of Lal Ded and Nund Rishi, Hindus and Muslims, who live under one sun and on one soil, should quarrel with or kill, each other....."

There was a hush and at the end of his moving speech, loud shouts of "Hindu-Muslim Bhai, Bhai" rent the sky. Complete peace returned to Srinagar after Sheikh Sahib, Bandhuji and other leaders had spoken at several places in the city. I was, however, a personal witness to the sad spectacle of the state administration under Col. Colvin laying the role of a mere spectator in that communal riot. The leaders alone brought the situation under control.

Pandit Kashap Bandhu had migrated to Lahore in the late twenties of this century. His original name was Pandit Tara Chand and he wrote Urdu poems under the pseudonym of "Bulbul". As a villager, he had enough opportunities to see the pitiable condition of the people in rural areas. He therefore, imbibed revolutionary ideas. There was neither a free press nor a free platform in Kashmir those days. So he made good his escape from Kashmir to serve his homeland from Punjab. He established contacts with the Punjab revolutionaries. His association with the Arya Samaj proved useful to him but he was trying to start a revolutionary movement in Kashmir also.

By nature, Bandhuji was very emotional and the developments which had shaken Kashmir in 1931, forced him to come back to Kashmir. He had assumed name of Kashyap Bandhu. In this change of his name, he kept in his view his homeland since Kashmir is named after Kashyapa Rishi as the Neelmat Puran gives us to understand. While in Punjab, Bandhuji worked hard for the welfare of Kashmiri labourers. He would pick up a quarrel with anybody who derisively called them "Hatos". And he was a well built man who had confidence in himself.

Bandhuji was fully conversant with Sanskrit, Persian, Urdu, Hindi and Kashmiri. The flow of his pen in Urdu and Hindi was as swift as the water of the Jhelum in spate. His "Challant" column in the

daily Martand of Srinagar in the early thirties, can even now serve as a model for any writer in Urdu or Hindi who wants to try his hand at satire. His satire was quite subtle and polished, so much so that even the victim of this satire, who tore his hair in desperation, would like to read the column for its artistic value and absence of any crudeness.

During my meeting with him in September last, he told me in reply to a question, that he had written his memoirs. "But who knows if these memoirs, which I am trying to bring up-to-date, will at all be published after my death?" he said in a low voice looking towards the window on his left.

36 *Kashyap Bandhu*

Justice J. N. Bhat (Retd.), Jammu

Scholars, intellectuals, journalists, bureaucrats and other eminent people will write articles on the life of Sh. Kashyap Bandhu. I do not want to waste the time of the reader to go through a long article, the subject of which must find place in other writers write-ups though I was closely associated with Bandhu Jee and his activities.

Sh. Bandhu Jee originally came from GEERU village of district Pulwama with a name of Tara Chand and pen name BULBUL. He migrated to Lahore in his early twenties associated himself with the Arya Samaj and its activities, got education in its institutions and ultimately after becoming a pucca Arya Samajee returned to his native State Kashmir with a mission in early thirties as Kashyap Bandhu.

Sh. Prem Nath Bazaz and other some well wishers of the community started the Sanatan Dharam Yuvak Sabha in 1931 but Mr. Bazaz was turned out and condemned because having functioned as a representative of the Pandits in Galancy Commission had not put forth any case on behalf of the Pandit community. Bandhu Jee, young and dynamic with a vision took charge of the Sanatan Dharam Yuvak Sabha and ran the organisation for a decade representing the view points and grievances of the Kashmiri Pandit community with a forceful pen and new ideas. The daily paper MARTAND was made a standard daily paper with substantial information as the voice of Kashmiri Pandits. One Mr. Sayedain and otherwise and eminent educationist adopted anti-Pandit administrative policies, Bandhu Jee reserved a blank column every day in the MARTAND under the caption Director Education Aur Hum with the verse:

"Khamoshi Guftagoo hai Bezubaan hai Zabaan Meri"

Every morning when MARTAND rises, the sun would provide the light to the world. The MARTAND news paper would kindle the hearts of almost every Kashmiri Pandit. There was a separate page or pages as need be under the caption CHALLANT where Bandhu Jee would write humorous Satirical and meaningful write-ups according to the prevailing conditions. In this way Bandhu Jee dominated the Kashmiri Pandit scene, seeing its life and other matters connected therein for a decade of years in thirties.

Bandhu Jee a dynamic young leader with abundant self-confidence and firm determination (necessary characteristic in a leader) aroused the dozing Kashmiri Pandit community of clerks and floated a new and original idea of the change of Kashmiri Pandit ladies dress from a complicated expensive tedious combination to a simple cotton saree and a blouse all within the range of Rs. 10/-. The drastic reform became most popular and continues to date with the difference that a single cotton saree and blouse worth Rs. 10/- only have been replaced by sarees worth thousands of rupees each. Bandhu Jee came to rescue the poorer section of the Pandit community by reducing gold ornaments to a tola or so and abolished expensive and extravagant expenditure on such festivals as Dapan Batta, Durbatta and Ghar Achun etc. Prominent Pandits of the day like Sh. Amar Nath Kak, Shiv Narayan Fotedar, Zanardan Teng worked with him in these ventures.

Bandhu Jee took special steps for the amelioration of Kashmiri Pandit ladies. He started female education, established Women Welfare Trust where Kashmiri Pandit Women would get educated. In this venture he was assisted by Prof. S. K. Toshkhani and Pt. Aftab Koul Nizamat. The measure had come to stay and female education is as common as male education in the State. He had the courage to introduce the -measure of widow re-marriage. Under his forceful pressure the Maharaja also permitted widow re-marriage. Thus Bandhu Jee dominated the whole social and political scene of Kashmiri Pandits for a decade feeling that Pandits should come out from the narrow grove of communal politics. As a gesture of goodwill and political expediency he joined the National Conference started by Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah in 1938. He worked shoulder to shoulder with

National Conference leadership demanding justice to the poor down-trodden Muslim Community and a movement against Maharaja Hari Singh's autocratic rule.

When National Conference came to power in 1948 Bandhu Jee was appointed as Rehabilitation Officer by Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah where he effected reforms in the rural life of Jammu and Kashmir. After some time he parted company with Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah also and retired from politics and published a weekly newspaper DESH for a number of years. Bandhu Jee was a forceful personality and ace orator and an active worker. He toured the state and delivered very instructive lectures. Once he cut his little finger with a knife while addressing a huge gathering of Kashmiri Pandits at Hari Parbhat to impress upon them the necessity of sacrifice for their existence and survival in the State.

This in short is a resume of Bandhu Jee's life, his contribution to the social and political life of the State. In his time there was only one Organisation in Kashmir, Sanatan Dharam Yuvak Sabha with a number of stalwarts who carried the crusade of their harassed community as against the splinter groups of Kashmiri Pandits working under self-styled and self-centered upstart leaders now; some of whom are accused of misleading the community and misusing and misappropriating funds received for the survival of the community.

37 A Colossus Amongst Kashmiri Reformers

Glimpses From Kashyap Bandhu's Life

O. N. Razdan, Calcutta

My father and I were heading for Hari Parbat and I had to run intermittently to keep pace with him.

When we reached Hari Parbat I could discern a large gathering had collected on the flat portion of the hillock and amongst centrally placed was Kashyap Bandhu who sang "rahe uncha duniya main janda hamara" with a flag fluttering, the flag of late Maharaja Hari Singh. First Kashyap Bandhu sang, then he was followed by the gathering.

My father was medium placed teacher in State Government, frequently transferred from Muzafarabad, near Kohala bridge, the boundary of the state and Shopian. It was when my father was in Muzafarabad, when I was 8 years old that I happened to visit the Hari Parbat for the first time. My father gave me the details about the meeting. He told me that the person who was holding the flag was a great leader amongst Kashmiris and a great social reformer. Kashyap Bandhu was exhorting the gathering.

'Give up Phiren and Narwar (a printed cloth stiched to the arms of the Phiran) and replace it with the Sari'. Those days the following song was on everybody's lips "Traavi nerwar nerwar traavi lo lo, hata bhagwana su zamana baye yiyna, kori loch poch, baye nerwar diyena" (commenting on Kashyap Bandhu's clarion call, it said give up nerwar, may God bring that period back when a daughter was given warm clothes in replacement of sari). After the meeting was over, we returned home.

I still remember with clarity, my father bought some yards of red cloth and gave it to a tailor nearby with a request to stitch Kameez and Shalwar., Those days Shalwar Kameez was not common and my father had to explain to the tailor with drawings and designs. After some days the Shalwar Kameez was brought from the tailor.

I recall another incident during the days of Kashyap Bandhu. I don't remember whether it was a government or private Organisation, that had brought out a booklet giving salient features of Kashmiri Pandits. According to the booklet, Kashmiri Pandits have one predominant feature. It was "azarwun" a sort of jealousy. In the drawing room one man was looking with his raised eyebrows and with a convulsed face looking at the neighbours new built house wondering how could a neighbour construct a house better than his ? Universally, jealousy must be common human weakness otherwise how could Cardinal Newman, a noted English writer, say that not only should one have double-belled doors but others, friends, relations and neighbours should know that you have double-belled doors.

Kashyap Bandhu's two main points were 1. Give up Pheran and Nerwer for Sari and 2. Social reform in marriages. Kashyap Bandhu could easily infuse his gathering with high ideals and conceptual convictions. My father was equally involved in the same. As a matter of fact he improved on the sari by its exchange by Shalwar and Kameez which I personally believe is an improvement on Sari in view of the torrid climate and the convenience and ease in wearing it.

As soon as my father brought Salwar and Kameez there was a knock at the main gate. My grandfather from my mother's side was a frequent visitor to our house for "sheer chai" (a saltish tea). We had a system whereby our Toar-a semicircular moving device which could open or close the main door with a string and simultaneously identify the person from kaani (top storey).

Kashyap Bandhu was very tall, well built and good looking with curly hair who through his oratorical skill could persuade dedicated workers to go to a marriage and in turn persuade people not to spend more than their means.

This issue of Vitasta is dedicated to Kashyap Bandhu and let us complete the job initiated by him.

38 On the Importance of Social Reform

Surendra Munshi, Calcutta

Reform refers to changes in the way something is done or organised. Its purpose is to bring about an improvement, a change for the better. Human beings may reform themselves or be persuaded by others to adopt a better way of life. Thus, a person may give up bad habits and proudly present himself or herself as a reformed character. These are personal reforms. When reforms are addressed to social issues with the participation of several persons it is usual to think of them as social reforms. To differentiate between reforms and revolution is common in sociology. Reforms are believed to be in favour of a change that preserves the existing values but provides improved means to realise them. Revolution on the other hand is believed to be directed towards replacement of existing values. While reforms are seen as gradual, revolution is seen as abrupt. Some people plead for reforms on the ground that unless they are carried out in time a sudden sweeping change may become necessary. Not many enjoy the thought of being swept off their feet! When an organised effort is made in favour of a common cause by a number of persons over a period of time it is usual to talk of that effort as a movement. There can be reform as well as revolutionary movements. History teaches that what appears as sudden is hardly ever without prior preparations.

A distinction has been suggested between personal reforms and social reforms. This distinction is valid only up to a point. Even our most personal reforms are not divorced from social life. Thus, what will be considered a bad habit depends largely on the society or the social group in the society to which a person belongs. A small episode stands out in my memory. When I was doing my first fieldwork as a student of sociology at Agra, an elderly person made a comment to me to which I had no reply. He belonged to the Jatav caste that is traditionally associated with leather work. He said to me that when persons from his caste indulged in drinking alcohol, upper-caste people looked down upon it as an inferior activity. But when persons belonging to upper castes enjoyed their drinks they regarded it as a modern activity. Not only the perception of a bad habit but the method of its correction is often suggested by the society to which a person belongs. Human beings usually draw from their cultural resources.

History provides many examples of social reforms from different parts of the world. Several concerned persons in Europe in the nineteenth century were interested in the social problems of their time. Reforms were suggested by reformers as remedies for poverty, squalor, broken families, child labour, and other early results of the factory system, just as these problems were approached from a different angle by revolutionaries. Important advances in social research and sample surveys were made in the course of assessments of the extent of these problems in society.

The role of women in reform movements, as in other social activities, is not fully appreciated. Women in the United States during the nineteenth century, for example, participated in several reform movements: to improve education, to improve prison conditions, to ban alcoholic drinks, and, during the pre-Civil War period, to free the slaves. Some women compared their position with that of the slaves. This brought into prominence some remarkable women who were feminists and abolitionists, pleading for the rights of women and also for the rights of blacks. It is not widely known that the fourteenth and fifteenth amendments to the American Constitution, adopted in 1868 and 1870 respectively, granted citizenship and suffrage to blacks but not to women. Women had to struggle longer to secure their rights. Even now they have to struggle for child-care centres for working women and for their other demands.

From the very beginning of social reform in British India social reformers were concerned with the ills of their society. Such illustrious figures as Ram Mohan Roy, Ishwarachandra Vidyasagar, Gopal Hari Deshmukh, Jyotiba Govind Phule, and Dayananda Saraswati stand out from the early period. In the religious field, Ram Mohan's main concern was the Hindu system of idolatory, its rituals and superstitions. As a social reformer, he was involved with the condition of women in Hindu society. It was Vidyasagar who took up the cause of widows, a cause that was taken up all over the country.

The reform he advocated and brought to a successful conclusion was the legal right of a highcaste widow to remarry. Deshmukh spoke against the caste system and the poor condition of women. Phule took up the fight against the oppression by Brahmins and did much to promote the interests of untouchables and women. Dayananda was concerned with the corruption in Hinduism of his time, and he used his considerable energies for reform. Later, nationalism and reform came together most notably in the personalities of Bankim Chandra Chattajee and Bal Gangadhar Tilak. Both of them wanted India to become strong again, and they proposed the internal reform of Hinduism for the Purpose. Some of the most influential leaders who followed were Lajpat Rai, Vivekananda and Aurobindo. Vivekananda saw the deficiencies of Hinduism which he denounced, and the reform he preached drew from what he believed to be the true spirit of Hinduism.

No mention of social reform in India can overlook the remarkable personality of Gandhi. He believed in the truth of all religions, and that accounts for his religious tolerance. This devotee of Rama drew his inspiration from the Bhagavad Gita. He struggled against the excesses of his own religion, such as untouchability, and tried to promote amity between all religious communities, especially Hindus and Muslims.

Kashyap Bandhu was another reformer who took up the cause of women. He advocated widow remarriage and also emphasised the need for girls to get equal opportunity with boys in education.

How are we to view the question of social reform and social reformers? Social reform is directed towards developing an enlightened view of society. Its task is to rebuild by removing defects; its promise is to bring a better way of life into existence. Defects cannot be removed if they are not examined without prejudice. A biased doctor cannot make the right diagnosis. The tools of social reform are reason and persuasion. All social reformers have used their capacity to think for identifying defects. They have then used their capacity to persuade for convincing others about the need to change their ways.

The path of social reformers is not easy. They do not always receive flowers for their efforts. Social reformers are remembered well not by garlanding their pictures once in a year but by keeping their spirit alive. No society can develop without this spirit of struggle for improvement. Social reformers have shown care rather than its absence in their criticism of their societies. They knew that improvements in the social sphere were closely connected with improvements in other spheres. Thus, for example, it has been universally recognised that economic and political development is not possible beyond a point without the education of men as well as women. This insight is borne out by social science research. It is useful to keep in mind that the problem of over population in this country cannot be solved by coercive methods that Sanjay Gandhi made popular at one time in this country. The problem can be solved in a sustainable manner by education, especially of women, and by better health care. Both are important areas of reform that have attracted the attention of social reformers all over the world.

It is clear that Hindu society has not seen through the reform that some of its most distinguished members have pleaded for in different parts of the country. All of them were moved by the spirit of making their country strong. We do not seem to have learnt much from them. Turning to our own community, when Kashyap Bandhu advocated restrictions on wasteful expenditure during social occasions, he wanted to channelise the resources of the community for creative purposes. There is an urgent need for reform in this sphere. Several, concerned observers have noted in the words of Udainath Kaul how 'extravagance and one-upmanship' have increased in the community over time. We need also to go beyond Kashyap Bandhu, We need to ask ourselves what ails our community currently and how we can overcome our present defects. Any social reform that we undertake must answer the questions of our times, especially concerning the younger generation. They must not lose their identity and their rich cultural heritage. This identity cannot be preserved by becoming defensive and by turning to obscure practices but by a creative adaptation of our heritage to our present needs. We have also to think of novel ways of carrying out reforms, for our dispersed physical condition requires all the resources of innovation to create a movement.

Can we overcome our egoism and stand together as a community so that we may emerge stronger and perform a useful role for our state and our country ?

39 Towards a Global Reform Movement Among Kashmiri Pandits

Prof. S. Bhatt, New Delhi

39.1 Introduction

At the outset we may ask ourselves as to when do we need a reform movement ? A reform movement is perhaps necessary - when a community is in difficult circumstances such as the Kashmiri Pandits find themselves in today's world. Our community is uprooted from its environments in Kashmir and its members are scattered all over the world. For a decade since 1990, people belonging to this great community find themselves in an uncharted ocean, not knowing where to go and where to look for direction. Their cultural heritage from Kashmir is disintegrating. The response to this historical challenge is to start a reform movement within us.

The Calcutta Kashmiri Pandit Association deserves our praise in organising this volume of *Vitasta* journal in memory of a great son of Kashmir, Shri Kashyap Bandhu, who in 1930s and 1940s led a reform movement among KPs in Kashmir. The issues he focused then concerned widow marriage, female education, dowry reform, help to poor sections of KP society, and promoting knowledge through newspapers such as *Martand*, *Desh* and *Kesri*. Bandhuji did succeed in achieving the goals he set forth. Today, we see the KP community as a dynamic and educated society in which females especially have excelled and the society is very enlightened. True to their heritage, Kashmiri Pandits represent leading lights in the Indian society in which Jawaharlal Nehru, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, Master Zinda Kaul, Dina Nath Nadim and Prof. Jialal Kaul are a few bright examples. Kashmiri Pandits also carry with them historically a spiritual heritage par excellence represented by Lal Ded, Rupa Bhawani and many more outstanding saints and sages, and in our time, by Swami Lakhmanjoo and Bhagwan Gopinathji. These seers are classic examples of great spiritual beings of the world who spoke for all mankind. In the present day world of science and scientific exploration when the emphasis is on man to mankind approach, these seers throw light on global peace and harmony. They create hope for those who seek peace in the twenty-first century. They also help in the synthesis of cultures and tolerance of religions.

Today Kashmiri Pandits need to remind themselves how they have faced difficult times in history and the response they made to the challenges. In terms of their achievements one needs to go through the pages of the book "The Kashmiri Pandit" by Pt. Anand Kaul (Utpal Publication) first published in 1924. He says for example at page 74 : "There is hardly any Indian state where a Kashmiri Pandit has not been at one time or other Prime Minister At present Rajah Sir Daya Kishan Kaul is the Chief Minister of Patiala, Sir Sukhdev Prasad Kak is the Prime Minister of Jodhpur, Colonel Kailash Narayan Haksar is the Finance Member of Gwalior and Pandit Piare Kishen Wattal is the Foreign and Political Minister of Bikaner" The list cited by Pt. Anand Kaul is a long one and need not be reproduced here fully. At another place Kaul refers to the genesis of Kashmiri Pandits. At page 29, he writes that "Kashmiri Pandits have ever been renowned for their genius and higher proficiency in learning." He elaborates further the past history of Kashmiri Pandits : "In short, Kashmir was a great area of sciences and arts There were poets, philosophers, grammarians, historians, astronomers and physicians, who, while living, shone like bright luminaries in the firmament. These master-minds and great thinkers immortalised themselves by writing books on different branches of sciences . . which are the wonders of the world."

I suggest strongly to the younger generation in particular to read this book on Kashmiri Pandits by Pt. Anand Kaul. You will get a glimpse from this slim volume on the great heritage of intellect and spirit that KPs have. Kaul refers to the sublime simplicity of KPs who were rishis, sages, hermits and ascetics, who cared less for worldly enjoyment with minimum of subsistence (page 1). I think these values about Kashmiri Pandits are even true in modern times. These are imperishable traits of KPs that help us revive our heritage and meet challenges of modern times. These values have a splendour of their own. They indeed make KPs represent a higher stock of human civilisation. KPs belong to a

different gene pool which has been preserved in the United States, as indicated by one of our leading biologists, Dr. T.N. Khoshoo.

39.2 *Rajatarangini and other Sources on K.P.*

Rajatarangini, as we know, is a classic on Kashmiri history of the Middle Ages. It was written by a KP called Kalhana Pandit during 1148-49 A.D. in Sanskrit language. As M.A. Stein writes in Rajatarangini : "Kalhana's family was Brahman by caste. Sanskrit learning of the type displayed in the Rajatarangini has, in Kashmir, as elsewhere in India, been cultivated chiefly if not exclusively, by Pandits of Brahman descent", pages 7-8. Kalhana was proud of being a Brahmin, says Stein. He had studied Saivism and other literary epics. He therefore represents very much KP literary and spiritual background for which KPs are known in history and current period. Some of the leading scholars of present day like Dr. B.N. Pandit can compare well with Kathana's scholarship.

In another historical book "The Valley of Kashmir", the writer Walter R. Lawrence wrote in 1895 about Kashmiri Pandits:

They (KPS) are a very intelligent and intellectual race of men, of excellent manners, and often very charming and amusing companions. They are fluent and ready writers. They can undergo great strain and fatigue when necessity arises, in spite of their soft, gentle appearance. They often amass great wealth in a short time, but they are very generous and lavish in their expenditure, and their money soon goes. It is to be regretted that they have not built any work of public utility in their beloved city, (Page 282, 1996 Edition by Kashmir Kitab Ghar, Jammu)

Lawrence mentions that Kashmiris normally like to stay and work in the valley of Kashmir, quoting a Kashmiri proverb "chari chu kand thari peth karar" - meaning that a bird is content when it is rested on its branch with thorns. How much has world changed since the last hundred years for KPs ? A handful of people are now scattered all over the world, a global diaspora indeed.

So much for the historical leaning and background of KP community. Let us now examine our problems of present day and how a reform movement can be launched world-wide to redeem our honour and heritage and work with common brotherhood and unity in a vastly expanded world. What essentially inspires us that our community consists of people who are simple, noble, and creative individuals. We have an outstanding history behind of service to mankind. We are genetically a sublime people and have much to contribute to modern civilisation in many fields of science and technology and in developing a harmonious world. We stand on pillars built by our great saints and sages who were spiritually most enlightened. Our ancestors are of the like of Kalhana Pandit and Lal Ded who have made their place in history and created enlightenment for mankind. The present is a dark period of terrorism in Kashmir. Wisdom from history must prevail sooner and harmony and peace should return to the valley.

39.3 *Parameters of a New Reform Movement for Kashmiri Pandits*

According to the needs of our time and in view of dispersal of Kashmiri Pandit society around the world, I suggest following points which may form the basis of a new reform movement of KP for the 21st century which we have entered. I hope these views are common to all and meet with the expectations of all parts of our community. These issues are as follows: (1) Unity and brotherhood, (2) Preserving KP cultural heritage, (3) Help to weaker sections of our society, (4) Keeping alive Kashmiri language, (5) K.P. population centres, (6) Maintaining links with cultural and spiritual centres in Kashmir, (7) Creation of new centres of KP culture and history outside Kashmir, (8) Promoting global peace and harmony.

1. Unity and brotherhood

A major challenge before us is to keep our identity for the future. This can be achieved by promoting unity among all sections of our society 'm various parts of the world. Distance is bound to separate us. However, modern communications help us to promote unity. We indeed have to inspire among us a new brotherhood based on our common cultural heritage. We belong to a group of saints and

sages from Kashmir who were members of a large family. Let us not forget we are descendants of Lal Ded, Parmanand, Rup Bhawani and Bhagwan Gopinath, and people of their generation. Our heritage and genetic background should help evolve a new spirit of brotherhood and unity. We cannot therefore get lost among 6 billion people of the world.

2. Preserving KP Cultural Heritage

Each community has its own culture which gives it form and shape. In spite of problems of history and external incursions into Kashmir, KP heritage has survived for the past over thousand years or more. Kalhana wrote Rajatringini in 1149 A.D. In this historical treatise he has described the outstanding virtue and cultural richness of KPs. These qualities have come down with us to this day. Our spiritual life, cultural festivals, marriage rituals, and thirst for knowledge and excellence form a distinct part of our cultural make-up. Therefore we need to strengthen our cultural, spiritual, and educational centres. New cultural centres need to be established in various geographical areas. Some pioneers have done tremendous work to establish new cultural institutions. Shri Pran Nath Kaul for example has dedicated towards opening temples for propagation of spiritual life of Bhagwan Gopi Nath. Others in New Delhi have established centres for Kashmir Shaivism propagated by revered Swami Lakhmanjoo. Shri M.K. Kaw, President of Kashmir Education Society and currently Secretary, Ministry of Education, Government of India, is making plans for an international cultural, educational centre for KPs in Pamposh Enclave, New Delhi. Mr. J.N. Kaul of AIKS has constructed Hari Parbat and Schools in and around Delhi. A host of dedicated people among our migrant population have done a yeoman's work in Jammu and created temples like Kheer Bhawani etc. And the philanthropist and creative social workers have built cultural centres in Calcutta and Bombay, apart from many other centres being planned elsewhere and in overseas in USA and Canada. Therefore, we need not be disheartened with our progress. After all as Master Zinda Kaul says in a song and a prayer:

***Thou art the knowledge of the seekers,
Though art the trance of mystics,
Though Brahm, thou Yazdan
Life and Light of the world.***

(See Dr. A.N. Raina, book Zinda Kaul, Makers of Indian Literature, Sahitya Academy, New Delhi, 1974, page 26).

Master Zinda Kaul thus pays tribute to our cultural and mystical history by offering above prayer. Indeed, a common prayer book will be very useful for all KPs. Bhagwan Gopinath's prayer book in about 150 stanzas prepared by Prof. Janki Nath Sharma should be a model, as it contains all important prayer generally recited by KPs. A set of common festivals such as Herat, Navreh, Zeth Ashtami for Ragina Devi and a day for Sharika Devi will be useful to remind of our spiritual life of community followed in Kashmir.

3. Help to Weaker Sections

Our reform movement should be directed to the upliftment of the poor and weaker sections of our society. This includes those unfortunate migrants brethren who are lodged in refugee camps in Jammu and other parts of the country. The entire KP community may draw a world-wide plan to collect finances and resettle our poor members who have, left their hearth and homes in Kashmir. In a recent address to Kashmir Education Society in Pamposh Enclave in New Delhi, Mr. T.N. Kaul, the former Foreign Secretary and an eminent writer, said repeatedly that our first duty is to help migrant KPs living in refugee camps in Jammu in particular. We may even involve international financial institutions to provide aid. Those KPs now living in USA and Canada can help this cause which is dear to all, and demands our utmost attention. In general, our society should evolve norms to generate help to poor sections of our society. During 1947 when KP exodus took place from the valley because of the tribal invasion from Pakistan, many old KPs did provide help to resettle the newcomers.

4. Kashmiri Language

Language is a key to knowledge. Kashmir has been a seat of learning in history. Kashmiri language can unfold a lot of historical wisdom contained in our ancient scriptures. Anand Kaul in his work "The Kashmiri Pandit" reminds us that in the middle ages particularly "no scholar could be considered well accomplished unless and until he had associated himself with the illustrious learned men in Kashmir . . . ". he quotes Hiuen Tsiang who visited Kashmir in 631 AD and engaged himself in studying Sanskrit : "The people of Kashmir love learning and are wellcultured. Since centuries, learning has been held in great respect in Kashmir."

Kashmiri language should therefore be promoted among our researchers and younger scholars. Foreign scholars should be encourage to wor upon our ancient literature. It was the efforts of M.A, Stein and W.R. Lawrence who made research studies on Kashmiri literature, and history, and on Lalded's, , Vaaks.

Among the common people, Kashmiri language is a tool for communication and a means to share common brotherhood. A minimum training in the use of Kashmiri language should form part of our global reform movement. Through Kashmiri language our younger generation can acquire knowledge about culture, history and eminent saints and people.

5. K.P. Population Centres

It is but natural that with the dispersal of KP society from the valley of Kashmir, new population centtes, although in small scale, have emerged outside Kashmir. My submission here is that our social leaders should be able to identify such new colonies, inform our society members to take advantage of such habitat, and make such centres attractive and habitable. Each colony should have cultural centres apart from usual social amenities. Sometimes, the AIKS and Kashmiri Samiti, Delhi, should hold annual conferences in these centres by rotation. There should be a sense of unity and belonging between various population centres. Amenities should be provided for visiting KPs from one colony to the other. Hawans may be organised on a mass scale in one centre where people from other colonies can participate. Spiritual festivals help people renew their association. We should not be isolated from each other. At the same time, we should plan to build new colonies to meet future demands of our members. It is also possible that older people from USA etc. can settle down in KP colonies in India where facilities exist for group life and for spiritual purposes. I hope the AIKS can come out with a paper on KP habitat movement which is a vital part of our reform movement. Such a document can inform places of KP settlement, number of people in each colony, facilities available, etc.

6. Maintaining links with Cultural / Spiritual Centres in Kashmir

Kashmiri Pandits' cultural and spiritual heritage emanates from the valley of Kashmir. As such, our centres of culture and spiritual excellence that exist in Kashmir should continue to inspire us wherever we are. I believe that each one of us should be visiting Kashmir and draw the bliss from our temples and historical monuments. Our society should now organise maintenance and upkeep of places like Kher Bhawani in Tula Mula, Sharika Devi Mandir in Hari Parbat, Shri Amar Nath Mandir, Raghunath Mandir, the Ram Chander Temple complex near S.P. College, Maa Ishta Devi temple complex in Srinagar and a host of other historical monuments and pilgrim places. We may be able to recruit pujaris from Jammu and other places who can perform pujas. Necessary accommodation may be constructed at these sites for visiting pilgrims. At least in Tula Mula, Ishta Devi Mandir and Hari Parbat and Raghunath temple enough rooms should be provided for people visiting from places within the valley and from outside Kashmir. Let our bright and prosperous sons in USA in particular donate liberally for safeguarding our temples and monuments in Kashmir. The AIKS and other cultural bodies can organise groups of people visiting above temples on festival days like jeth Ashtami. During my visit to the valley in October 1998 there was much less evidence of interest shown by KP social institutions in proper maintenance of our spiritual centres. This may be due to present security conditions in Kashmir. Let a group of dedicated persons undertake this work and ask

for world-wide funding. Terrorism may last some more years in Kashmir. But we need not neglect this work. We need not forget our responsibility towards our historical centres of spiritual excellence.

7. Creation of new Cultural and Educational Centres outside Kashmir

In view of KPs having moved outside the valley in recent years, new centres for education and cultural activities are needed in many parts of India and outside India. Some attempts for institution-building have been made in New Delhi, Calcutta, Bombay etc. Kashmiri Samiti has during the past 50 years illumined the minds of KPs and others by spiritual and cultural programmes. Koshur Samachar has provided information on our day to day life. The Samiti has produced special numbers on KP heritage from time to time. Therefore we are grateful to those who served in the Samiti and also in AIKS for their social services to our community in difficult times.

There is need to link above cultural centres in India and with overseas centres. Each centre should have at least a hall, a museum, depicting our saints and sages through history. Like Calcutta KP association, each centre should produce a news letter or an annual journal reflecting the activities performed by the regional centre.

On a wider scale we need an international cultural educational centre such as is being envisaged in Pamposh Enclave in New Delhi. This KP Colony has assumed the importance of a place of pilgrimage because of its temples of Bhagwan Gopi Nath and Shiva, and the cultural activities of the colony. Many old and prominent KP members reside in Pamposh Enclave. An international centre should therefore come up which will link KP heritage with Kashmir on the one hand and provide links to other cultural centres in India and abroad. Thus Saivism, Sufism and knowledge about Kashmir's history can be developed. Research works on our ancestors and their intellectual and spiritual attainments can be organised. The world will be richer when old knowledge from Kashmir is combined with modern developments in science and technology. Prof. Ilya Prigogine, a Noble-laureate in Physics, has in his book "Order out of Chaos" shown effectively how eastern mysticism and modern post-Einstein science can throw light on problems of our Scholars and seers with wide interest can be invited to think of the past and present and synthesize cultural and scientific values for order and harmony in the universe. Unbridled religious fundamentalism is costing mankind dearly. Religious terrorism is a threat to the existence of peaceful world order. However, there is a parallel world-wide movement for global harmony. Therefore Kashmiri heritage has ideas to promote global life with peace and progress.

8. Promoting Global Peace and Harmony

The contemporary reform movement should also focus on promoting global peace and harmony. KP heritage symbolises harmony and common spirituality of mankind. KPs have historical credentials to perform this onerous task for our civilisation. Our historians like Prof. Ravinder Kumar Pandit and sociologist like Prof. T.N. Madan and others should take the centre stage and patronise our cultural and educational institutions and spread global peace and harmony. One has to simply look through the pages of history of KPs to reflect on the subject of global harmony. I have a feeling that our younger generation scholars are well adapted to forge new ideas of excellence in science and society based on the mystic experience of the past. We have every hope that the 21st century will be a period of enlightenment that our ancestors have been dreaming about.

In conclusion, I submit that we have to look for Kashyap Bandhus of our time who will initiate new reforms movement for KPs. I have attempted to sketch a brief outline of the pattern of the movement. Some may agree with me whereas others may differ, but some action is needed of course to meet the challenges of our times and preserve our identity. Stagnation will not help our society. I see a movement within all of us. The question is to combine our efforts together and see the light ahead of us. Progress is bound to come as progress involves addition of knowledge, wisdom and social harmony.

40 TAIKS: A Potential Movement of Kashmiri Pandit Diaspora

Dr. B. K. Moza, Calcutta

40.1 Introduction

All India Kashmiri Samaj (AIKS) is a remarkable movement of Kashmiri Pandit diaspora of twentieth century. This movement has had its organisational birth exactly two decades back and has behind it a great potential of thoughtful objectives for the survival and advancement of the scattered Kashmiri Pandit (KP) community. This is an appropriate time to review the performance of this intrinsically potential movement. Often a question mark is generally raised as to whether AIKS has come up to the objectives for which this movement was started?

In this paper a perspective of this organization and its evolution are being discussed with a view to reviewing its achievements and short comings and creating a brainstorm for making it more effective and purposeful in fulfilling the objectives for which it was originally set up.

Historically Kashmiri Pandit migrants settled in various parts of India, tried to live closer to each other for reasons of social contacts, participation in each other's moments of joy and sorrow, safety considerations, mother tongue and such commonalities, observance of festivals and festivities and for such reasons as matrimonial contacts and information there of etc. Naturally it became necessary as also convenient for them to form a Society, Sabha, Association or call it by any other nomenclature to perform up to these expectations. The purpose also being to perpetuate community traditions and culture as far as possible and thus preserve the community identity.

40.2 Twentieth Century Diaspora

Initially, after the partition, the diaspora of Kashmiri Pandits (KPs) found its cause in entirely a different reason. In 1947 after the invasion of Kashmir by raiders across the border and subsequent accession of J & K State to India there was transfer of power from Maharaja to popular Government of National Conference led by Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah who was a leader of the masses which essentially comprised of the majority Muslim community. Since KPs were in a minority they had to bear the brunt of injustice, very unfortunately, despite their full involvement and glorious contribution to the freedom movement of Kashmir. With the purpose of implementing Socialistic Pattern of Society, the measures of reservations for the so-called downtrodden and the preferences for the majority became the guiding principles for the local Governments to achieve popularity and good will of the masses which comprised the vote bank. Unfortunately the Kashmiri Pandit community did not fall in this preferred criteria. Accordingly the merit became a secondary consideration and whether justified or not the Kashmiri Pandits became the victims of discrimination and such misrule of far reaching consequences. Despite their merit and capabilities they were deprived of their due rights on account of being a minority in the valley; they were denied their rightful share in the nominations for higher education, since at that time there were no professional colleges in Kashmir; they were also denied deserving jobs since the yardstick for employment was not essentially the merit or seniority but the community label one had tagged to one self. Land reforms, implemented for the first time anywhere in the country, enacting land to the tiller, added to this set back of KP community and therefore for all these collective reasons Kashmiri Pandits had to come out gradually in search of their livelihood, employment and opportunities for higher education. As a result an ongoing process of migration of KPs to places set in which they accepted as a fate accomplished. Large number of families came out of Kashmir and for one or the other reason they settled in the length and breadth of the country though Delhi and other metropolitan cities in the North became their first choice. These migrants had their home and hearth in Kashmir where they used to go whenever an occasion arose essentially on the occurrence of deaths of their kith and kin, generally elderly, who used to remain in Kashmir or on the occasion of the marriages and such festive occasions in the family. This diaspora was, therefore, different from the earlier ones which because of difficult conditions of communication, transportation and absolutely hostile atmosphere were irreversible migrations forcing

almost absolute isolation from those relations left behind in the valley. Such an inevitable diaspora of this type continued on this pattern till 1989-90 when the militancy in Kashmir took a very violent shape and Kashmiri Pandits had to become displaced internally almost en-masse as refugees in their own country. In nutshell the twentieth century diaspora of Kashmiri Pandits from their motherland became the result of firstly they being discriminated and politically deprived as a minority and secondly towards the end decade of the millennium, they being terrorised to abandon their centuries' old hearths and homes in their motherland on account of Islamic fundamentalism and terrorism unleashed by the neighbouring Islamic country as a proxy war against India.

40.3 *Formation of AIKS*

Kashmiri Pandits settled outside the state or Within it formed their community associations essentially for social as also for political reasons. This led to the formation of various Kashmiri Pandit organizations in various parts of the country and abroad, each having its own objectives and priorities. However, in general, there was no cohesion amongst such numerous organizations, no common approach to solve their common problems particularly on social front. All the representative Associations were feeling a vacuum in their relationship, a missing link in coordination with one another till the leadership role was taken by Kashmiri Samaj of Allahabad. They called, in the first stage, a get-together of U.P. Associations and then of All India organizations and in March 1980 the first All India Samaj meeting was held at Allahabad under the Presidentship of Mr. Justice P.N. Bakshi which led to the formation of this federal organization. Within nine months' time the second Conference of AIKS was held at Calcutta on 27th and 28th December 1980 where more than fifteen Sabhas / Samities / Samajs of Kashmiri Pandits had a historical Conference and the draft Constitution of the AIKS was adopted. Separately the Presidential Address delivered by Justice P.N. Bakshi is included in this publication for ready reference which appeared in the "Kashmir in 2000 A.D." Annual Number (1981) of the *Vitasta*, Calcutta of which I happened to be the editor. AIKS received at this stage the support of 22 KP organisations. Few members from Srinagar also participated in this historical Conference. The main emphasis was on creating a movement amongst Kashmiri Pandits for bringing about cohesiveness amongst themselves and breaking the barriers of distinction amongst the Kashmiri speaking and non-Kashmiri speaking Kashmiri Pandits on the premise that both were the sons of the same land. The objectives of the Samaj were essentially of coordinating amongst the affiliated units matters related to social aspects, to improving employment opportunities, matrimonial rapport, discouraging dowry curse which has been a serious issue, bringing out a news-letter / publication of relevant information for circulation amongst member units, providing relief and medical assistance, propagating the Kashmiri language and preserving the Kashmiri Pandit culture and heritage. Annual get-togethers were held for reviewing the activities of the Samaj and developing a closer connection with our roots in Kashmir. In fact AIKS was purported to become the Apex Body of Kashmiri Pandits. Soon it had four organizations from Kashmir affiliated to it and comprised of a total affiliation of 38 units of which there were few from overseas also. As regards its office it was initially decided to have a rotating one, it being the place of its elected President. It was assumed that this would as well bring in some variety and also motivate the affiliated units to perform on this responsibility with improved results. After Justice Bakshi, respectively Col P.N. Kak, affectionately known as Papa (the then President of Calcutta Sabha), Dr. N.L. Zutshi (President of Bombay Pandit Sabha), Brig R.N. Madan, (President of Jaipur Sabha) became the Presidents after a tenure of two year's term each. Since Delhi is the main nerve centre of activities and because the complexion of KP problems took a different turn then, Delhi became the Head Quarter of AIKS as soon as Dr. Zutshi's tenure was over and respectively Brig. R.N. Madan, Shri D.N. Munshi and Shri J.N. Kaul (President of Faridabad Samiti) operated from Delhi and performed commendably. Shri J.N. Kaul is presently the President of AIKS for the sixth year.

40.4 *Sabhas, Samaj & Sammelan*

At the Jodhpur Conference in 1982 I had the opportunity of communicating a paper entitled, "Sabhas, Samaj and Sammelan" which was subsequently published in the Vitasta Annual 1983, and reproduced in the Martand, Srinagar in three instalments on 2nd, 8th & 14th June 1983. A clear line of demarcation in responsibilities and objectives was drawn between a Sabha / Samiti and the Samaj. Whilst the Sabha / Samiti or similar local affiliate was assumed to play the pertinent role as the representative Organisation of KPs at a particular location, looking after the interests of community locally at that location, it was clearly assumed in this paper, that the main objective of the AIKS was to coordinate the activities of the local affiliates, initiate a common plan of action for our roots or for preserving the tradition, culture and heritage of our community and playing the role of an Apex Body with full responsibility and authority to take care of the common objectives of the community and coordinating the same through the affiliated units. The common community agenda could be generation of funds, establishment of Trusts, Endowments, awards and recognitions. for our community individuals for their excellent performances, creating educational institutions which would have as their essential objectives the preservation of Kashmiri Pandit culture, literature, heritage and Kashmiri language. It was also assigned to safe-guard community assets and interests particularly in Kashmir. It was also assumed to create Institutions for preserving our Vedic system of Karam-Kand and create awareness and respect and provide for prospective employment of our Gurujis. One of the important objectives considered for our Apex Body was to enable community windows to be opened to healthier trends and practices amongst other communities in India or abroad to encourage excellence, infuse newer trends, bring about social reforms and related enlightenments. To facilitate this coordination an Annual Get-together of all the affiliated units was considered necessary as the "Sammelán" where all important matters which required general discussion and general approval of the affiliated units were discussed for implementation. In this proposal a clear demarcation was drawn between the objectives of a local unit and the Apex Body, AIKS, so that there was no overlapping of objectives. It extended further in detailing the role of AIKS as the Apex Body and the respect and authority it required so as to function appropriately up to its assigned objectives. Of the 10 objective which AIKS was assigned the first and foremost objective read as follows." To coordinate activities of all Sabhas for common programmes of community welfare and to bring them closer to one another."

40.5 *KP Exodus & AIKS*

The traumatic exodus of KPs from Kashmir in 1989-90 and their ethnic cleansing from the valley brought about an added responsibility on AIKS suddenly and therefore the priorities of its agenda shifted to the relief and rehabilitation of the uprooted brotheren from the valley. Though ten years have passed this problem is still as critical and serious and continues to remain unresolved because of its very difficult and chaotic prognosis. However, AIKS has emerged as a very important player to avert demoralisation of the suffering brotheren and in providing possible relief and help in refugee camps. In this connection the Jaipur Convention held in 1991 was a milestone in the history of AIKS. Pt. Dwarkanath Munshi was unanimously elected as the President of AIKS and a line of action was drawn. To bring awareness to Kashmiri Pandit problem an Advisory Committee of well known Kashmiri Pandit authorities was formed so that with their advice and help Governmental, national and international assistance was received to solve the rehabilitation of uprooted KPs from the valley. AIKS Trust was formed as an independent arm of the AIKS and funds were collected for extending relief to the displaced victims and providing financial source for various action plans that AIKS considered purposeful for mitigating the sufferings the victimised brotheren. To bring about unity amongst various frontal organizations at Jammu, a Migrant Action Committee was formed with (late) Mr. M.L. Aima as its President and this Committee worked very dedicatedly under the leadership of Mr. Munshi to create a joint front (AIKS-MAC) for solving the day to day problems that were being faced by the migrants in Camps at Jammu and Udhampur. A MAHASAMMELAN of all the units was proposed to be held which, however, could not be organized on the scale as

originally conceived. Further with the assistance of Shri J.N. Kaul who was then the President of Faridabad Samiti and President of S. O. S., a Computer Training Centre was established at Faridabad which was been providing training to displaced youth from the camps free of cost and has also succeeded in providing employment to the trainees who have been trained at this centre. This has been one of the greatest achievements of AIKS and this activity is successfully being continued under the leadership of Shri J.N. Kaul . The publication of AIKS, Naad, was started and from a News Letter it has now developed into a recognised community journal ; this is being edited by Shri Omkar Kachru. In 1994 Shri J.N. Kaul took over as the President of AIKS and with his personal recognitions and dedicated efforts, AIKS has further received impetus and financial strength to continue with the on going projects of AIKS whether in camps or at Faridabad Computer Centre or at its Head Quarter at Delhi related to K P rehabilitation issues.

40.6 Present Objectives of AIKS

In order to discuss the present performance of AIKS and suggest improvements it is necessary to consider firstly the presently obtaining objectives of the AIKS which are as follows:

- (a) To provide relief, including educational, medical facilities to the poor and to carry on their activities of general public utility.
- (b) To promote educational, social activities and national integration cultural, preserve and promote economic and spiritual integration and welfare of the people.
- (c) To work for various public charitable objects.
- (d) To carry on other activities such as publication of journals etc. in furtherance of the activities of the Samaj.
- (e) To guide, coordinate & monitor the various activities of unit members.

(Reproduced, verbatim, from NAAD, Vol. 7, No. 10, 1997)

The above objectives of AIKS, which are currently obtaining, need a thorough examination and insight to create a brainstorm for the functioning of AIKS as the Apex Body of Kashmiri Pandit organizations. The fundamental questions which arise are as follows:

- 1) Why the objectives are generalised and not specifically attributed to Kashmiri Pandits and their unit organisations ?
- 2) In which respect these objectives are different from those of any other unit not responsible and accountable as the Apex Body of KP organizations ? Some of the affiliates may be performing on still important objectives pertaining to KPs.
- 3) The only differentiating function of AIKS is to coordinate the affiliated units and provide them guidance for community Action Plans. Why this objective is not the first priority of AIKS, the Apex Body ?

40.7 Discussion

The objectives of an Organization are supposedly based on logic and one would not oversimplify the rationale of above objectives as assumed presently by our Apex Body. However, it is apparent that we still feel desirable to only imply Kashmiri Pandit connection and not to highlight it. In his Presidential Address (reproduced in this Annual) in the Ist., Annual meeting of AIKS held at Calcutta, justice Bakshi pointed out this weakness of Kashmiri Pandits and preferred to be "blunt" about this. Objectives define, determine and direct the subsequent activities of an organization and therefore, it is high time our AIKS restructures its objectives and prioritises these to suit those of an Apex Body of Kashmiri Pandits. Whatever AIKS is presently doing is more or less the same what an affiliated unit may be doing. But AIKS was formed as the Apex Body of KP organizations and therefore its prime role should be that of a coordinator or initiator of Action-plans of common interest of all the affiliated units. Whilst delegating the action on various agenda to its frontal or specialist units it should monitor the performance on common agenda and help in solving the difficulties which the units may

be facing and create resources and infrastructure for member units to facilitate action on the common and priority agenda for the survival and advancement of the community as a whole. That such a performance is not an easy job is being recognised whilst drawing attention to this, but functionally that is what is expected of an Apex Body. The functions of AIKS require to be divided into 1) Political, 2) Social, 3) Cultural, 4) Financial and 5) Miscellaneous Action plans. There should not be many agenda under these heads; just one agendum of highest common interest and priority to the community in each should be taken up by AIKS for its implementation. The actions on these agenda will be carried out along with the help of concerned frontal affiliated units based in appropriate locations and having necessary capabilities to perform as Action Leaders. A procedure requires to be worked out so that involvement of all the affiliated units is achieved for the implementation of these few but essential agenda of AIKS which should be of common interest to the KP community. The Apex Body has to work out measures by which duplication of the same activity is minimised, as far as possible, and maximum attention is given to achieving quality of performance and effective implementation. How all this can be achieved requires involvement of all the affiliated units no matter where it is situated. This requires a brain storm to enable such a thing practically happening. It is the function of Apex Body to organize the same, restricting its emphasis on only few issues. It is repeated that implementation of such action plans is an uphill task but that is what is expected of an Apex Body. Our community requires to change and develop leaders and that is the role which our Apex Body has to perform.

40.8 *Conclusion*

AIKS is the Apex Body of KP organizations spread over globally. There is a need for functional restructuring of AIKS for which its present objectives require to be looked into so that it performs up to the expectations for which this organization was formed. Its main role is that of a cohesive, coordinating monitor and up to this objective it has to work out and brain storm the action plans. First the organizational concept of the Apex Body is to be well identified and appropriately supported by strengths of authority and resources. Then only can AIKS succeed in solving our fundamental problems like rehabilitation of our uprooted brotheren, developing a working script for our mother tongue and preserving our identity. AIKS is a great movement of Kashmiri Pandit 20th century diaspora but it has still to gain momentum to perform up to the objectives it was formed and to the responsibilities it has acquired being the Apex Body of Kashmiri Pandits scattered globally. Action on this proposal will be a befitting homage to Shri KASHYAP BANDHU to whom this paper is dedicated whilst observing his birth centenary.

41 Presidential Address

By Mr. Justice P. N. Bakshi at The Second All India Kashmiri Samaj Conference Held in Calcutta on 27th & 28th December, 1980

[Reproduced from the Vitasta Annual, 1985 - Martand Number]

Honoured Chief Guest, Lt. Col. Kak President of the Local Kashmiri Samaj, Members on the dias, fellow delegates, Ladies & Gentlemen.

I am extremely happy to be present here this morning amidst my fellow brethren from all parts of the country. As you know we have been scattered all over during the last 50 years and even though we are now in the farthest corners of the country, I do feel that we are losing track of each other as a result of which there appears to be no cohesion, no harmony and no co-operation between each one of us. It was this idea which was mooted out by the Kashmiri Samaj of Allahabad and more strictly speaking which originated in Bombay through my revered late cousin Shri Sham Sunder Nath Sopori which we caught hold of and worked upon early this year in the month of March since we organised our first Conference in Allahabad. Before I speak to You about what we have done in the last nine months and what we wish to do in future, let me at the outset thank from the bottom of my heart the Kashmir Sabha Calcutta, Col. Kak, Mr. Dhar, Mr. Razdan and each and every member of the Managing Committee who have been so kind, so considerate as to make almost an unimaginable comfortable arrangement for me, as well as all the delegates that have come here. They have set up a standard which might be even difficult for the successors to emulate, but I am happy at the potentiality which this local Samaj has exhibited. When we called the first meeting of the Samaj in Allahabad it was just a haphazard affair, first we invited the provincial Samajs, the response was encouraging, and therefore we took the courage to invite other Samaj of whom we could get the addresses. Thirteen Samajs were represented at the last conference at Allahabad. During the span of last 9 months, I am really happy to inform you, that we have grown and today we have 22 Samajs affiliated with the All India Kashmiri Samaj. We have added 9 Samajs in 9 months. Five are absolutely new which have been born at Patiala, at Ahmedabad, at Hyderabad, at Moradabad and Jodhpur. The most recent addition is Moradabad about 15 days back and jodhpur about 3 weeks back. The other four were asleep, they were in slumber, they have been rejuvenated and asked to join us and actively participate. The position therefore is that today we have 22 active Samajs doing the work for our community who are represented in this meeting. We have also tried to expand the activities of the Samaj outside our country, because we do not want to limit our activities in any manner whatsoever and our objectives are ultimately to have an International Association of Kashmiris.

We have at present enrolled Mr. Ganjoo from London and Mr. Prabhat Hukku from Liberia and one more member from New York whose letter I was expecting but have not yet received but it might have reached Allahabad already. So on the roll we have two overseas members. Dr. K.N. Kaul and Mr. B.L. Razdan have promised me yesterday that in their numerous trips to foreign countries they will try to expand our activities and enroll more and more overseas members of the All India Kashmiri Samaj.

On the social side, we have taken up three projects. The first project was trying to help young men in getting employment. I have been receiving applications from Srinagar, from Jammu, from Delhi, the capital itself, and from Agra, wanting assistance in securing employment, These applications have been forwarded to the various centres with the request for help and I dare say that through our efforts some of the unemployed or unsatisfactorily employed have been employed during the course of the year. They are few in number, the start has been made and we shall try to develop this project.

The other aspect which we are trying to develop is the assistance given to various Samajs and individuals in setting marriages. We have opened a Marriage Bureau at Allahabad and I understand the same work is being done here at Calcutta also. We have been receiving numerous applications

preparing a register and we shall co-ordinate our activities and then give the various references to the willing parties so that they can negotiate. In this manner we have also succeeded in settling a couple of marriages. This aspect will also be developed that I have no doubt that success will be with us.

The third aspect which we have taken up and in respect of which a resolution had also been passed in the last conference was, fight against the dowry system. This is a very pernicious evil which is very rampant and appears to grow with a greater speed than it can be suppressed. I had also the occasion of personally addressing few of our Samajs at different places in which this topic was touched and since yesterday that I am here we have been discussing this matter again and again with, the various members we have come across and especially the member of the Calcutta Sabha. It is a very knotty problem but it has got to be tackled and we do hope that in times to come we will tackle this problem psychologically because I feel that a psychological approach is more important in this case than any other. However, we will take that matter up in our business session and we will discuss it further, and to devise ways and means to deal with this question.

Now, apart from this report which I have given regarding the progress of the association, I would like to mention one or two matters which have struck us because I feel it is necessary to exchange ideas on those topics. One of them is that there seems to be a very artificial distinction between the Kashmiri speaking Kashmiris coming from Kashmir and the non-Kashmiri speaking Kashmiris who have already migrated to this part of the country 300 years ago or may be 100 years ago. There appears to be an artificial barrier which does not permit assimilation of both these sections of our society. Numerous reasons have been given for this distinction. Some people say that when Kashmiri speaking Kashmiris come together they start speaking Kashmiri, with the result proceedings and mix with them because we do not know their language. Other say that certain sections are suffering from an inferiority complex. And the third opinion is that certain sections are suffering from superiority complex. In this way innumerable reasons are given. Whether we have migrated 100 years ago from Kashmir or 50 years ago or 10 years ago, or today, it makes no difference at all, because we are the sons of the same land. This artificial barrier which is trying to keep us away should be completely eradicated and there should be no such distinction. There should be a spirit of accommodation and tolerance. If somebody objects he cannot understand the Kashmiri language, don't speak it. It is all right, we should learn the language, it's our own language. It's our mother tongue, and we are sorry we do not know it. If or one have volunteered to teach the Kashmiri language from any of my Kashmiri brethren who is living in Allahabad. I volunteered and told him to come to me every Sunday, have his lunch with me and teach me the Kashmiri language. So we want to learn it and if facilities are provided there is no reason why we should not pick it up, but the position that I can't speak it today should not be a barrier between you and me. Make me learn it and if I can't understand you, then don't speak it for the time being, speak a language by which I can understand you. So from both sides it has got to be a spirit of give and take, so that we can really understand each other in the proper spirit. I am sure if that is the procedure and the method by which we try to understand each others difficulties, this artificial barrier will vanish and we will be able to come closer more and more.

The other question which has been agitating my mind and which I have felt, also requires mentioning is that we are ashamed of calling ourselves Kashmiris. I am very frank, I am very blunt, but I think bluntness and frankness is necessary. We are ashamed of saying we are going to attend a meeting of the Kashmiri Samaj. We are not ashamed of saying that we are going to attend a meeting of an International Association or a particular mission of a particular club. But we are ashamed of saying that we are going to attend a meeting of the Kashmiri Association. Why ? Because there seems to be a misconception that if we say so, we will be called communalists, that we are communal minded, we don't think in the higher perspective, and therefore no communalism, no Kashmirism ? And we must hide the fact that we are going to the meeting of the Kashmiri Samaj ? When I am asked in my own city whether I organised or was I responsible for organising a Kashmiri Sabha in quarters which were rather high, I had no hesitation in saying yes, I did for the benefit of my community and my country. We have got in London, Welsh Associations, Scotch Associations, I have been to London

three times. Nobody in Britain says that a Welsh Association or a Scot Association is communal Association. Nobody says that a Welshman or a Scot is not a Britisher. Why should we think on narrow lines that because we are members of a Kashmiri Association we are not Indians ? We are Indians, Indians first. We are Kashmiris cum Indians. There is no hostility, there is no conflict between the Kashmiri culture and the Indian culture. We have not formed this association to fight against Indian culture, we have not formed it to fight against our nationalistic activities. As a matter of fact, the object is to get the community which is scattered here and there together so that we can flow in a regular stream for the purpose of doing national good. That is the object of combining the entire community together so that we may flow in the same stream and we could say that the Kashmiri Association has discharged its national duty. That is our object, and that is how we help the country. We are enrolling Overseas members. These Overseas members are sending us Dollars, they are sending us Pounds, we are earning foreign exchange. What is this for ? That is for the country. Therefore, you are earning foreign exchange. You are a serviceful community ; a community that is earning foreign exchange for the Government, for the State. So we are serving the State and not doing any disservice to the State. We don't eliminate or exclude from our membership our girls and boys who have married outside the community. We assimilate them. If the boy is a Kashmiri it does not matter to which community the other spouse belongs. We have them as our members. We are assimilating them-cultural integration. How can one get an impression we are indulging in the anti-national activities ? As a matter of fact, it is one of the most nationalistic activities to promote social and cultural integration. This is what we are doing. So, the objects with which our Samaj has been formed are wholly nationalistic and I cannot see any reason why we should be shy of saying that we are members of the Kashmiri Samaj. These being our laudable objects, we are here to form the association to serve ourselves, to consolidate ourselves, for the service of our country. I would now close my speech with just two lines quoted from a famous Kashmiri poet of Lucknow, Pandit Brij Narain Chakbast:

गुरुर और जहल को बस दूर से सलाम करो
कुछ अपने कौम के बच्चों का इन्तजाम करो
यह बात याद रहे चाहे जान रहे या न रहे
जमीन रहे न रहे, आसमान रहे न रहे।

Thank you.

42 India-Pakistan or Independent Kashmir

Why Not Panun Kashmir?

K L Moza, Noida

**"Asi Aes Asi Asav Asi daur Karav Pat-i-Vath
Shivas Sorui ne Zavun Ti Marun
Roosui Sorui ne At-i-gath"**

(We were, we shall be, we have thronged this earth for ever, The Shiva is neither born nor shall die, like the gazelle who does not stop roaming about) (Lal Ded Vakya Stanza 4 Adhyaya 8th) I was murdered, I was butchered, I was cut into pieces, I was forcibly converted to their faith. I have been thrown out of my valley lock stock and barrel. I am languishing in tattered tents and one room ovens guarded by poisonous reptiles far away from the city like an outcaste. It is worse than Jewish Ghettos, worse than concentration camps. They resisted but I am suffering in such sub-human conditions, in torrential rain, in scorching heat with mercury touching 45 degrees enveloped by dust storms and gazing expectantly with hungry looks towards my PANUN KASHMIR. I am dreaming of the day when I shall be back to my home where I was tortured several times for the last hundred of

years. I am surviving on this slender thread of hope. I was there then. I existed. I did not perish. I still exist, though in Exile for the last ten years.

He, too, is there. Centuries back he switched over his faith, more under threat than by conviction. He sold his conscience. He was Me then but he is "He" now and I am "I". He has become more venomous, he has looted my property, he has burnt my house. He was in command and he is still in command. Will he ever vacate my house, my shop, my orchard which he has usurped ? Why is this government, talking of Ram Rajya, still silent ? Will he allow me to return to my homeland ?

In Jammu, Hindus are in majority; In Leh, Buddhists are in majority and only in one-third, the Kashmiri Muslims are in majority. Yet they have been ruling and robbing the whole nation for the last fifty years.

Zul Qadir Khan chained me as a slave with my 50000 bretheren to be sold in far off markets but enroute we perished in a blizzard.

Sikander Butshikan converted my brethren. Those who resisted were killed. Others who could, fled. Just eleven families remained and withstood the tyranny.

The bodies of those killed were thrown in Dal Lake and an island was formed there which is nicknamed as Bata Mazar (Graveyard of Pandits).

In the Islamic tradition, I was stoned to death as a "Kafir" at a place which is still called as KANIKOOT (Stone Crusher).

I was attacked in a peaceful and a picturesque place just short of Pahalgam which is still called BATAKOOT (Crushing place of Pandits). My mothers, sisters, daughters cried for help but I stood watching as a wounded helpless witness. I was there when six maunds of Sacred Brahmnic thread (jenu) were collected from the bonded necks of my brethren and burnt during the rule of Sultan Sikandar.

Even during the rule of Maharaja Hari Singh, I was attacked on 13th July 1931 under the guise of freedom movement. The day is remembered as "Yaum-e-Shudha" - "The Martyrs day" by those who put me to sword.

He demolished my Mahakali Temple and constructed Syed Mir Ali Hamadan Shrine. I was made to withdraw yet I continue there on the banks of Vitasta worshipping a symbolic relic, reminiscent of my Kali Ma whom I adorned with Sindhooi paste. Despite persecution I am still there.

I survived inspite of massacre of Zul Qadir Khan. I survived poverty, starvation, disease and mental torture.

I survived the persecution, violence of Syed Ali of Hamadan who converted 37000 Hindus to Islam. Temples which were Symbols of art and culture were demolished such as Temple of Martand (The Sun Temple), Vijaysen, Chakrabrat and famous temple Vijyasvara at Bijbehara. Even from 1990 onwards fifty eight temples were destroyed as was acknowledged by the Government in the Parliament. I am still there, a tolerant patient and a helpless being.

I was there when Haider Shah got our noses and ears chopped off which was followed by loot, rape and arson. That was 1470-72.

I am either one amongst lost tribe of Jews or one amongst ancient Aryan settlements which had settled on the banks of Saraswati. But I am now rootless.

I fled alongwith thousands of others, on foot, and on horse backs through dense and dark forests, crossing 9000 to 14000 feet high peaks of Pir Panjal. Enroute to the plains, many died of hunger, most of them detoured to Baderwah and Kishtwar from Batawath (Pandit Route) which has got metamorphosed into Batote. Some settled there while some dragged on and found refuge in Allahabad, Varanasi, Delhi (at Sitaram Bazar), Lucknow (in Kashmiri Mohala) and even as far as in Assam to save themselves from the Barbarians and the Vandals.

The condition is no different between 1320 and 1948 onwards. On a NAVREH (New Year) function held at the Constitution Club (Now called Vithal Bhai Patel House) in the year 1950, Late KN Katju, the then Home Minister of India, said, "Then we fled on foot or on horse backs and now we use vehicular transport-conditions have not changed". Late Jawahar Lal Nehru, Late Smt. Rameshori and Late Dr. Sidh Nath Kaul, all were present.

Ten precious years have passed since the onslaught by children of Gengis Khan and Tamerlane started. How long am I to wait ?

Mahjoor the very own poet once said about Kashmiris:

"Zuv jan vandha Hindustanas-dil chum Pakistanis Kun"

(I shall surrender everything, life and money for India yet my heart beats for Pakistan).

It was thought that Economic Progress would change the thinking of Kashmiris but this proved wrong and the reverse has happened. The mud houses with thatched roofs have changed into Pucca Stone or brick Bungalows. At present the per capita income of The Kashmiri is the highest in India. Education is free. Necessities of life are subsidized by the Government. What about Income Tax, Sales Tax, Water Charges and Electricity Charges? It is free for all.

Central Government is subsidizing J&K State Budget to the tune of One thousand crore (Rs. 1000 crore) per year and an equal amount is spent on Military and Para-Military establishments. This amount could have uplifted half fed and half naked population of half Bharatavarsha.

42.1 *What is the solution ?*

Panun Kashmir, (A separate piece of land within Kashmir for Kashmiri Pandits). None will be evacuated not even, our Kashmiri Muslims brethren who can coexist with us. It should be centrally administered. Our boys and girls be given compulsory Arms Training for two years to meet the challenge of the terrorists and the mercenaries, we should have a University of our own-separate Medical and an Engineering College. Initial Expenditure will be Rs. 1000/- (One thousand) Crore. All other details can be worked out.

Jammu, Leh and Kargil should be separate States or else Centrally administered states.

Let there be Plebiscite in Kashmir whether they want India, Pakistan or Independent Kashmir. If this is done, people of Occupied Kashmir-Bunji-Gilgit-Chilas and Skardu etc should be included. They are totally fed up with Pakistan but their condition has not come into focus. Mafia is in full control. No elections have been held there, majority of people living there are living below poverty line.

This may save us from future torture, forcible conversions and inhuman existence.

43 Lalleshwari and the Rishi Movement

Pt. Moti Lal Pushkar, Jammu

During Mother Lalla's days of youth, Kashmir was in a boiling pot. External invasions and internal chaos, killings, mass-migration, destruction of religious places and forced mass-conversions were order of the day.

Kashmiri society was badly divided among various warring groups, Casteism was playing havoc and intermitant palace - revolts had thrown up inexperienced faces to do further damage to the already worn out political fabric. Corruption was rampant at all levels, lack of foresight and absence of moral values had added fuel to existing inferno. This trend touched its nadir during the reign of S. Sikandar the iconoclast (1390-1414 A.D.). With the result mass exodus and heavy toll of life took place. Only eleven Pandit families saved themselves by hiding in mountain caves and thick forests; living an unnoticed life there.

It was devastation of un-imagined magnitude. Social consciousness was a far cry. Heroic valour was on wane. The great Philosophical treasure proved of little help. Faith in Divine justice was lost. In such a turmoil a ray of hope appeared on the horizon challenging the forces of darkness and sustained masses by applying bahn of love. It ventured to give new direction to the prevailing situation. It was Lalleshwari and her Rishi Movement.

Divine Mother Lalla directed all towards divine love of Shiva. She travelled from village to village and gave encouragement to the masses. She changed the fate of hopeless lot. She changed despair into eternal hope. Wherever she went she strengthened faith in Shiva. This became a regular feature of her mission. The Vaidic, the Shaivas, the Vaishnavas, the Buddhists, the jains, the Shaktaas including the converted Kashmiris received love and affection from her. She would recite devotional songs to bless them all. This very approach took form of a movement known as the "Rishi Movement" of Lalleshwari.

In the days of yore, sages and seers of Kashmir applied the same approach to unite the Nagas, the Pishaachas and the Madras into one whole. They had established Ashrams at various places. These still carry the word "home" like "Dudurhome", "Humahome", "Khuyahome" etc. This was reason that Lalla the greatest of all the sages accepted word Rishi i.e. a Sage for her mission.

43.1 The Institution of Moul

Lalla gave further push to this Rishi Movement. She involved another great Rishi 'Nunda' in this venture and established two thousand homes. It was to give a new start, a new life to the deestablished order.

The daily routine there, in these homes was recitation of devotional songs, lamps used to be lit, offering of oil for this purpose was accepted, community feasts were held, images installed, daily "Arati" was regularly offered. Devotees would offer donation (Cash and kind) and "Prasad" and "Bhasami" was received from incharge of a home. Annual festivals used to be celebrated on mass scale and cultural events presented.

The chief of a home was called Moul i.e. a patron saint who was expected to offer fatherly treatment towards one and all. This institution of Moul proved a substitution for spiritual, social and even political leadership that was done to death by the forces of destruction.

It was a non violent approach to solve the burning problems of the day. It is a fact that an order can be established either by an iron hand of a ruthless ruler or by a non-violent approach based on love, service, sympathy and dedication. Our tradition had been the non-violent approach of the Rishis.

Mother Lalla convinced masses that violence against man amounts to violence against Shiva. She silenced militancy, extremism and piety. Her impact was visible during her times and after words also. Her approach had left deep imprint on the masses that even the Sultan Badsah accepted Surya Bhatt's all the three demands gladly. These were (1) Return of migrants (2) Establishment of Sanskrit

schools and (3) Renovation of Hindu Shrines. Roop Bhavani 1621-1721 A.D. accepted Lalla as her Guru.

43.2 *The Great Mother Lalla*

Lalla was born at Pompow (Panthrethan) in 1320 A.D. in a pious Brahman family. The word Latta originates from the Sanskrit word Lalita i.e. the cosmic energy Durga. She was married to a Brahman youth when she was yet in teens.

Disappointed as she was with her mother-in-law's and her own husbands behaviour Lalla broke of all connections with her in-laws and started treading on spiritual path - the Shiva yoga. Her "Gurudev" namely Siddha Surikantha was a realized soul.

Her poetry is known as "Vak". These Vaks of her became mantras of this movement. These are even now as much important as these used to be during her lifetime. Seeing pitiable plight of people i.e. violence, false-hood intrignes, immorality etc. Lalla directed all to follow the righteous tracks. She came into prominence during 1344 to 1355 A.D. 'Sirnpur' i.e. her birth place had become a famous seat of Shiva leaming.

Her Philosophical thought moves round the Trika School of the Kashmiri Shaivism. She is accepted as a great Shivayogini world over. I see no-parallel to her in the history of Kashmir. Scholars have yet to access 'Mother Lalla' and her contributions. She was well-versed in the original Shaiva treatise, its classical works and practical aspects of Shivayoga. She was embodiment of "jnaana" "Karma" and "Bhakti" all in one. She recites:

'Know thyself. Don't treat yourself inferior and valueless'

Nunda Rishi has sung about her:

***"Lalla of Padmanpur drank
Deep into the elixir tank
She was Divinity Incarnate
May, Shiva bestow me the same state".***

Lalla attained "Nirvana" at Vijayeshwara in 1391 A.D. Her Samadhi still stands there. Alas ! this historical place has been encroached upon and occupied completely by the enemies of this Rishi Movement. This encroachment has occupied this actual temple Samadhi by creating walls of the mosque compound there on it. The same plight has been perpetuated on almost all the homes of the Rishi movement.

There are a few homes still alive here and there in the valley of Kashmir. The Rishi tradition is followed as per past practice. Week long Rishi festivals are organized, vegetarian food is served and Rishi devotees adopt the same approach in their respective house-holds during these days. These houses are (1) Rishi Moul Sahib, Anantnag (2) Batmoul Sahib, Srinagar (3) Rishi Sahib, Gulmarg and at many other places also.

At the time of Nirvana a divine light emerged forth of Lalla and entered the etherial sphere. Baba Daud Mishkati writes in his "ASRAR -UL-ABRAR" composed in 1654 A.D. that Lalla spent her days and nights contemplating on SHIVA.

43.3 *First Composer of verses in Kashmiri Language*

Lalla has been accepted as the first creative genius, say poetess of Kashmiri language. It was in 1914 A.D. that by Sir G. Grierson's efforts her Vaks were collected, numbering 258. Out of this lot 140 had been accepted as original. Actually a couple of years earlier a saintly person namely Dharam Das Darvesh of Guru Kupwara had collected and preserved 120 Vaks which were handed down to M.M. Mukud Ram Shastri who in his turn gave them to Sir G. Grierson. These were published by Grierson and Aurl Stein jointly. A few VAKS -

***Why art thee groping in the dark
See within and catch the track***

**Shiva is seated Himself there
Why art thee lost here and there.**

Mother Lalla advises that essential part of the spiritual growth is to control one's mind. It is by nature as wavering. It is often sensual pleasures and runs unchecked towards fresh pastures to feed itself upon. A master rider who is successful to guide his horse on the right track reaches his destination.

Lalla sings -

**Too much eating does not help
Too much fasting causes ego in self
By balancing diet, balance is obtained
Balance opens doors, goal is reached.**

About the Kundalini Yoga -

**Topped the ladder, reached the goal
Un-expectedly realized my soul
Physical, mental, worry no more
Lotus came forth from its core.**

She was doused in Shiva's love -

**Went out in search for Reality
Got exhausted singing His beauty.
Reached the spot but door was closed**

Had conquered greed and passion -

**I knew Shiva in many a previous birth
Have come from original source of Truth
Un-sophisticated can do no harm
Oneness with Shiva is the only charm**

Lalla's only mantram was Om. She was embodiment of constant heartfelt Japa. She had obtained salvation while in her mortal coil. It was all due to blessings of Shiva. She became Shiva herself and offered prayers to Shiva as per her own conscience. She recites-

**To Gurudeva repeatedly I asked
What is the name of 'NAMELESS'
Got exhausted, totally fed up
'NOTHING' hinted he, at 'MYSTERIOUS'**

Again Lalla Sings-

**Did not long for luxuries
Greed and desire not my soup
Got satisfied with simplicities
Bore brent of worries, reached top.
He who contemplates on Shiva alone
By constant Japa of Homa Shiva
After corssing attachment zone
Gets blessed by Parma Shiva.**

The transitory world-

**A petty tank size of a mustard seed
Various creatures come, quench thirst
Deer, jackal, oceanic elephants,
Other bastards are bom, drink and burst.
When face to face with Parama-Shiva
I started burning like a substance,**

***Crossed the Sixth wheel turma
Reached Seventh, It was cool moon shine hence.***

43.4 The Main Contribution of Rishi Movement

The inspirers of Rishi movement had to face a devastating problem of forced mass conversions to Islam. In this topsy turvy situation the way out was to unite the broken hearts by offering the love and respect. The invaders had created a permanent chism in the society. It was resultant of hate.

Against this back ground the Rishis of the day treated the whole society as one whole and offered affection. Lalla in that hour of crisis declared that all paths lead to Shiva. He is present in every creature big and small the Hindu and the Musalman.

Nunda Rishi as the most prominent pillar of this movement cautioned Zealot, thus -

***Beware, thee don't Sow seeds of hate
Both are Sons of Shiva's trait
They are progeny of the same mother
Do good unite them together
Muslims and Hindus both come from Him
May thee be blessed by Him
Thee wrote books instead
To feed thyself in need.***

***These sermons don't stop thee
From doing many a sinful deed
This is really bad indeed
You, believe you are a chosen seed
Alas ! will not get desired feed. i.e. salvation***

Rishis did not spare the Hindus either for their small mindedness, casteism and egoistic approach. This concept of caste superiority had generated falsehood and self centred existence. This very tendency debarred the Tibetan Buddhist prince Rinchen from accepting the Vaidic faith, and unity of society was further shortened and door opened for further ruination. This same trend declared Nunda Rishi as a non-Hindu by the mighty pen of the historian Jounraja. This same trend did not allow both the communities to become one under the patronization of Swami Dayananda Sarawasati. Keeping this kind of approach in view Lalla had offered a ray of hope, had given patronization had united the masses through her marvellous way.

She opened doors of Rishi homes for both; offered nectar of cosmic presence of Shiva. This broadmindedness has come down to us from our great saints and seers. This broad mindedness was deshaped and wrapped in false-hood and false show.

43.5 Our tradition - KASHMIRIYAT

We are torch-bearers of the Sharda - culture. We should offer attention to our suffering brothers and sisters. We are supposed to see in them daughters of the Vitasta and sons of the Sharda. Let us behave properly and give proper direction to the victims of terrorism and violence. Those terrorist forces are out to destroy whatever remains of this concept of the "Kashmiriyat.." Our endeavour be the same as was demonstrated by mother Lalla. This was the approach of all the saints of the famous Bhakti movement. This is the preaching of Swami Vivekananda and Swami Ram Tirtha. Lalla recites -

शिव ह्यथ थलि थलि रोजान
मव जान ह्योन्द तअ मुस्लमान ॥

॥ शुभमस्तु ॥

44 On Some Behind The Scenes Parleys

Udai Kaul

In spite of Dr. B. K. Moza and his Editorial team having been able to cull out an extraordinary historical analytical and very learned material for the research oriented 2000 Vitasta Annual, I have been asked to write about the Parameshwari Agitation and other events I had been associated with.

I was in Delhi when the Parameshwari Agitation was at its peak. I was taken aback when my father chided me on telephone from Srinagar "O, you are in Delhi watching how we are getting beaten up and killed". Father was in Government service, never involved even in mild protests much less in agitation against the Government. His words stirred me enough to make me take a flight to Srinagar. On reaching home in Karan Nagar, Srinagar from the airport, I was taken aback to see a never-before-seen or even heard of procession of such huge dimensions of Kashmiri Pandits which was following the hearse of a Pandit killed, to the Shumshan (Burning Ghat). The atmosphere struck me as a sort of thunderbolt, so to say. In the course of the next 2 or 3 days I found almost all my Pandit friends, relations and elders deeply involved. Amongst those I met and conversed with were Pt. Gopi Kishan, Sri J L K Kalali, Dr. S N Peshin, Sri J N Bhat, Sri Harjilal, some stalwarts of the Yuvak Sabha and a few erstwhile Senior Advocate colleagues of the Srinagar Bar.

Mr. I K Gujral who was later to become the Prime Minister of India was deputed by Mr. S B Chavan, the Home Minister of Govt. of India to mediate with the Kashmiri Pandits. For some reasons I need not go in, I was deputed along with some senior Advocates to meet Mr. Gujral at the Srinagar Cheshmashahi Guest House. We were able to strike a very sympathetic and an understanding chord with Mr. Gujral. Our stand was very simple and straight - that Parmeshwari hadn't out of her freewill chosen to convert herself and marry a Muslim, that she should return to her mother's family (her father was dead), and after some time she be allowed to declare in an open Court her will freely which should be accepted by all, and that meantime all the Pandits arrested during the agitation should be released from the jails.

Mr. Gujral prima facie accepted these demands as very reasonable and desired to have a couple of days to get in touch with the Governments both at the State and Centre levels and work out the modalities. We had 3 meetings with Mr. Gujral and from our last meeting with him we returned satisfied.

But subsequently we found that the high handedness of the police increasing, thanks, what we came to know later, the black sheep amongst us including a Pandit Minister, who felt that Pandits had no 'backbone' and would succumb under police repression and, simultaneously, giving some crumbs by way of employment would see the end of the agitation. We discovered that Mr. Gujral meantime unobtrusively had slipped away to Delhi and found ourselves betrayed, stabbed in the back, so to say, as we could not get Parameshwari back and let her express her free will in an open Court as was agreed between Mr.. Gujral and ourselves.

This internecine and very harmful in-fighting phenomenon amongst us and the absence of a cohesive strong leadership was to bring me again face to face 7 years later in 1974. As usual I was in Srinagar on my annual trip in early April 1974. Some friends took me to Shitalnath to show me how two duly sealed locks, one over the other, were put on the Shitalnath office building. At the Deputy Commissioner's office (then popularly called GOVERNARY) the legal battle was on between two strong factions of the Pandits, each faction claiming right to the Shitalnath premises, and top lawyers were engaged by both the factions.

Ironically the leaders of the two factions whom I knew closely were very well meaning and essentially generous and of accommodative nature and I felt strongly that we had a good chance of getting them together and be under one banner. But I hadn't reckoned the type of problems that one had to face. It wasn't enough that the heads of the two factions were well meaning and had no

personal ambitions, and would be prepared to bury the hatchet. They were hamstrung by their organisers and workers who had tremendous ego problems and were in for a fight and a showdown.

Having decided to do what I could to bring the warring factions together, almost 2 months of hectic parleys followed with almost all who mattered. But this was not a case of two factions only. There were groups within groups, wheels within wheels, so to say, all essentially smeared with ego-centric problems.

The dispute on the face can simply be stated - One faction lead by that very learned and well intentioned doyen late Shri J L K Jalali was a de jure elected Committee of the Sanatan Dharam Yuvak Sabha. The other faction lead by our redoubtable, selfless, and accommodative Shri J N Bhat (who was later to become justice Bhat), Amarnath Vaishnavi and Late Amarnath Ganju wanted a change of leadership and felt that they had the majority with them to press for the change. The voting pattern was rather complicated. Apart from individual members, Sansthas of Chakreshwar, Pokhribal, Ganpatyar, Batyar, Baramulla, Anantnag and of other districts had a say as well in electing the Yuvak Sabha Committee at Shitalnath.

But taking stock of the overall situation after meeting cross section of our people, their representatives, and various Sansthas, I felt that out of sheer expediency, Sri J N Bhat and his team who were not only very vocal and assertive, but commanded the majority support should take over the reins at Shitalnath. But de jure, Sri J L K Jalali and his team who were duly elected had to run their full term. Dislodging them was all that the fight was about.

A way out had to be found, and a way out was found. After considerable efforts and very many meetings, a "secret" formula was worked out about which I may talk now.

It was decided that two public meetings would be called in Shitalnath and that too within a gap of one month. In the first meeting everyone which meant essentially Bhat Sahib and his group would openly accept the leadership (read Presidentship) of Jalali Sahib and in the 2nd public meeting which would follow within a month of the first meeting, Jalali Sahib would "willingly" step down and under a particular article of the constitution nominate Sri J N Bhat as his successor President.

I had the pleasure to host a meeting of the leaders and functionaries of both the groups of Jalali Sahib and Bhat Sahib and other stalwarts of the community at my place where the "secret" formula was endorsed by everyone.

But surprisingly some serious impediments problems again came up. The very next day gentlemen came to my residence in the morning time when I had already left my place. After a day long frantic search I was located late in the evening when Bhat Sahib himself met me and told me that his friends were not prepared to accept in open the leadership of Jalali Sahib and at best they would abstain from the open meeting called to endorse the Presidentship of Jalali Sahib, and in the light of the opposition of his "friends", some other way out should be found.

The embarrassing and the prickly situation can better be understood then described. I took the uncompromising stand that whatever was finally decided the previous day at my place had to be stuck to.

Another set of parleys and meetings to and fro followed and at long last all went as was decided and planned - two public meetings were held in Shitalnath where in the first meeting Jalali Sahib was accepted in open as a leader and President of the Yuvak Sabha, and in the 2nd meeting which followed within a month of the first meeting, Jalali Sahib stepped down and Bhat Sahib was ushered in as the new President.

The revival of the Yuvak Sabha and the follow up action were comparatively smooth. The cases from the Deputy Commissioner's office were withdrawn, locks in Shitalnath premises opened and the publication of the Daily Martand commenced after a successful massive drive to collect funds for resuming the publication of the Martand.

26th June 1974 is a red letter day in my inconsequential life. That day the community leaders, the stalwarts, representatives of our various Santhas of Srinagar, of districts, and a fairly large number of our community members gathered in Shitalnath to give me a unique honour by way of presenting me an Address formally which acknowledged and felicitated me for what little I was able to do to unify the community. At that juncture I felt then, as I do now, simply overwhelmed by that gesture and indebtedness was beyond measure simply because I will never be able to repay that debt of kindness and indulgence shown to me in an open meeting at Shitalnath.

45 *The Parmeshwari Movement*

Moti Lal Pushkar, Jammu

During the time span of the 20th century the Kashmiri Pandit community has asserted itself to preserve their 'Identity' by way of launching various movements for this purpose. The aim of these was to achieve moral upliftment, social reform, economic sustenance and political assertion as an ethnic group.

Founders and leaders of these movements approached the community and gave shape to their respective organizational structures. Miss Annie Besant was whole heartedly supported by Pandits in her mission to spread girls' education. They extended a helping hand to the social reform movement of late Bandhuji. Stopage to the child marriage system and support to the cause of widow remarriage was another type of social resurgence. False-hood and non-vegetarianism were given goodbye on marriages and other celebrations. The Roti agitation gave push to economic agenda. All those persons associated with the social reform movement formed the 'Sanatan Dharma Yuvak Sabha' Sheetal Nath to ignite spirit of political consciousness in Kashmiri Pandits.

These movements sprang up with the emergence of respective important personalities and paid a valuable contribution towards re-emergence of the community. In May 1967 a movement developed spontaneously. It is known as the 'Parmeshwari Agitation'. It was more dynamic in its approach and form. It surpassed all the previous movements. It was not initiated or launched by any single individual or group of individuals. It was an out burst that engulfed the whole Pandit mass. I am constrained to mention that while other movements had actually their origin in some or the other all 'India movements' of the day, this one was unique in its origin and formation. While other movements took shape during pre-independence period, this one emerged twenty years after India became free.

45.1 *Parmeshwari Handoo*

Parmeshwari was the name of the daughter of a Pandit widow namely Dhanwati, Rainawari, Srinagar. She was the only hope of her mother. Very simple and straight forward, away from the showy behaviour of modern times. Dhanwati Handoo had nurtured her only child with love and care. She had given her education to enable her to stand on her own legs. Dhanwati was a pious soul and a religious-minded woman.

In May '64 this young girl got appointment with the J and K State Co-operative Department. This appointment of the solitary Pandit girl proved a challenge to other employees who believed, perhaps under wrong notion, that the said department sustained its functioning on the villagers of the valley who are generally constituted of non-Pandit populace. This section of employees treated her as an unwanted figure; hence started harassing her. This harassment approach was a tested weapon in their hands to grab, destroy and frustrate others. One young employee namely Mr. Kanth (his family name) was the all powerful cashier there. He would deposit cash of day's sale proceeds but no receipt was given against that. Dilly dallying tactics were used on this or that pretext. At times receipt was given occasionally, only when 'Parama' had begged for the same time and again. She would inform about all this to the seniors in the office but they would always avoid her, giving false assurances. This type of attitude ultimately frustrated her badly. This fear psychosis became the cause of her moral breakdown. She was mentally exhausted and it disturbed the peace of mind of her mother as well. Coming home she would narrate whole day's torture to her dear mother.

One day with the help of another lady employee she was whisked away in a mysterious way. They kept her in confinement ; did not allow her to talk with her mother at all. She was threatened for wailing and weeping for her dear mother.

45.2 *Search for Daughter*

Her mother Dhanwati got pangs of anxiety when her daughter did not return home. She conveyed her anxiety to her immediate neighbour, late Mr. T.N. Dhar. He along with other friends approached the police. No information came forth. No concrete assurance was available from them. It was on third day that a group of elders contacted the C.M. in a deputation. He gave patient hearing but no one was touched. No clue became available. They had made this contact by involving persons associated with the ruling party.

Ultimately, a few distinguished Pandits contacted Pandits of other localities and involved Yuvak Sabha, Sheetal Nath, Srinagar in this connection. It was Shri Som Nath Ghasi and his friends who presented a clear picture to the print media. They made an appeal to the Pandit Samaj in general. Pandits extended whole hearted support. Besides the State Government, The Central Government were requested for support by this neglected community in this restoration case. Alas! no favourable action was taken by them at all. Suppressed and neglected community leaders gave a call for a peaceful 'Satyagraha' from the S. D. Y. S., Sheetal Nath platform.

45.3 *Srinagar Satyagraha*

Every day, as per programme honourable Pandits would collect in thousands at a specific point. From the mass abruptly five heroes would emerge with garlands and tilak on their foreheads. They would address public and explain the inaptness and indifference of the Government. These peaceful heroes would then court arrest. As per the policy of the ruling regime they would be treated in an inhuman way. Beating and torture were usual punishment besides, abuses of worst type. Even a devil would feel ashamed at hearing their loose talks. Their apathy towards Pandits was conspicuous and nasty. But the Satyagraha continued bearing all this. It was month of June '67 when the Pandits' anger took shape of this famous Satayagraha and it continued upto October '67.

Batches of heroes would participate from all places and all walks of life. It will be proper to mention here that Anantnag, Baramulla, Sopore, Handwara and many other places contributed their due share in this Satyagraha movement. Martand, Kulgam and Pulwama did not lag behind.

On one occasion, it was decided that the Pandit employees would go on mass leave. Lo! and behold! this section as it was treated as a class of most obedient servants' showed their mettle and abstained from duty with no exception at all. The State Chief Secretary Pt. P.N. Koul remained on leave and supported his community in this hour of test. The Government became nervous.

45.4 *Harassment of the Community*

The Government started Pandit harassment to break the back of this movement. Hundreds of Pandits were taken into custody. During night hours the Kashmir Reserved Police personnel would come and threaten Pandits in their predominantly Pandits localities. The Pandit treated all this harassment as a 'Dharma Yuddha' to protect the honour of their womanhood.

The moment police would appear, Pandits of the locality would blow Conch-shells. This clarion call would keep Pandits of other localities on their toes to face this onslaught. My person was on their catch list. They approached my Ganpatyar residence at midnight and started knocking at the main door. They consisted of a group of about twenty men carrying guns on their shoulders. Their formation presented a scene of battlefield. They started calling me out by name. My Shrimatiji peeped out of the window they called her to open the door and come down. She stepped out of the door. Abruptly they kept a gun on her chest, enquired about my whereabouts and the place of my hiding. Not satisfied with the answers they entered my house bet my brother and tenant mercilessly and arrested them both in my absence. Within minutes a good number of Pandits came out and the police party was compelled to stop further harassment. This was the approach of the State Police and Pandits during the movement and before as well. Pandits remained undeterred even in the face of this harassment and continued their Satyagraha with full vigour; as a result this way of Government handling earned a bad name for them. Censure of the Government regime became wide and visible.

Media reports of European, American, Chinese and other origins became more intense and they gave factual positions of this Pandit movement with every passing day. The national press did cover the whole situation along with pictures including minute details. The whole Pandit brother-hood felt disturbed on being pinched by the Governments' long arm methods. The Pandits of Delhi, Amritsar, Jammu, Kurukshetra, Mumbai, Calcutta, Jaipur held protests and peaceful demonstrations wherever possible and passed resolutions condemning the Police atrocities. To me it appears as the prelude to that destruction which took place from 1989 onwards to this date with Kashmiri Pandits which has made a new chapter to be added to the 'Rajtarangini'. The Satyagrahis used to raise the following slogans -

a) "Panch Naara Panduan, Chatta Nara jai Hind."

b) "Hamari Kanya Ko Vapis Karou."

c) "Har Har Mahadeva."

d) "Bharat Mata Ki jai."

During this Satyagraha, police would throw stones on the Pandits and fire grenades to the peaceful assembly of men, women and children. It seemed that they had lost all sense of decency. On Independence day 1967 a police informer threw acid on Pandit ladies at the Regul Chok, Srinagar. It was shameful on their part not to entertain Pandits hit by police, in any Government hospital for immediate treatment. I too was hit by a heavy stone at forehead. It started bleeding and Pandits took me to the Ratan Rani Hospital for immediate stitching. I had to spend a month there for treatment. The wards of the said hospital were full to their capacity with Pandit cases of police atrocities. This hospital tendered valuable help in this way when the Government hospitals had shut their doors on Pandit patients of police torture. It is situated on the right side of the Sheetal Nath grounds.

45.5 *Some Reactions*

Seeing such a vast and well organized peaceful Pandit Movement, some prominent Muslim leaders of Kashmir felt surprised. Ex-Revenue Minister Mr. Beg praised Pandits for this peaceful agitation. He stressed the point that the Muslims associated with Plebiscite Front take a lesson out of it and conduct their movement in a systematic way. But, the Speaker of the the then Legislative Assembly Mr. Qasim denounced the Pandits thus "if the Pandits demand the girl back how can we stop the Muslims from demanding Pakistan?" This type of anti-Pandit feeling was predominant in whole of Kashmiris ruling group. Six Pandit youngmen lost their lives due to police brutality and fundamentalists attacks. Shri Satish Razdan son of Pandit Kashi Nath Razdan, Nai Sarak, Ganpathyar, Srinagar was killed for showing courageous attitude. Tragic it was that Satish's father was posted at Calcutta as an important officer of Kashmir Emporium. Another young boy Avtar Krishan was murdered near the Fatehkadal bridge and thrown on the bank of Vitasta river. Pandit shops from Habbakadal to Buhrikadal were looted during night hours. Medical shops owned by Pandits were made main target of attack. This description of repression has been reported in detail in a booklet namely 'The Wail of the Vale'.

45.6 *Maha Yajana and Money Offering*

Pandits contributed money towards this movement. No Pandit family, no individual member of any family denied offering money. It was an unexpected and un-imaginable revolution in the history of Pandits. It surprised the organizers and all others. No individual student of the University of Kashmir and its colleges and schools lagged behind. Even from far flung villages and towns, money came forth. This money offering towards the 'Maha Yajana' helped us to keep the burning ambers alive. I myself, a bitter critic of my community for its indifference towards such social causes, was surprised to see donations coming forth in such a vast quantity. Pandits sent donations from other parts of the country also.

45.7 *Crows Unity Call*

"Batta - Batta Kaw Batta,"

There is a saying, "Batta Batta Kaw Batta", which denotes that a Pandit pays immediate attention to the distress call of another Pandit. It was heartening to note that no section of the community remained as an unattached observer. They participated wholeheartedly. The educated, semi-educated, so called Progressives or conservatives all contributed towards its successful functioning.

The Central Government remained totally indifferent. A deputation under the late Ghasi's leadership was not given access to meet the Prime Minister. They were very much eager to present this abduction case but all their efforts were frustrated to see the Prime Minister in person. At last it was decided to approach countrymen in this connection. With the result many an important person of national importance came to Sheetal Nath and supported this cause. One of the Jagat Guru Shankaracharyas announced his participation along with the hundreds of volunteers in this Satyagraha but State Government declared ban on this Holiness's entry into the State. Still many others came forth and offered their support to it. Many such supporters, a number of officers of Central Departments, offered help caring least for their jobs. Among them were a few from Delhi, Gujrat and Utter Pradesh. A big figure of Tele-Communication Department namely Shri Desai was presented a citation composed in Sanskrit verses by me to honour his contribution towards this movement in a public function.

45.8 *Pandit - Mothers' Participation*

Pandit mothers offered their support which is worth mentioning here. They took Parameshwari's abduction as a challenge to Pandit womanhood. At times it appeared that this movement was guided by Pandit mothers only. Their presence at Satyagraha points surpassed male Pandit presence. They outnumbered them. They would face police conning and stoning with their moral courage, tolerance and fore-bearance which they do generally acquire while conducting their household duties. They have imbibed moral values of Lalleshwari and Roopa Bhawani. They have successfully saved their progeny from getting into degradation and degeneration.

45.9 *Pandit Leaders Take Part*

In the beginning the Satyagraha groups would start from Sheetal Nath, Srinagar and other Pandits would follow them in processions. During these starting days the Pandit leader who came forward where Shri Ghasi, Shri Gopikrishan of 'Shivala', Late Balkrishna Handu, Advocate, Shri T.L. Tiploo, Advocate and Shri Somnath Suri and others. All these prominent figures were put behind the bars. As their replacement young faces came forth to continue the struggle. Some Sikh friends and Panjabi Hindus contributed their lot. Pandit Prem Nath Dogra asked questions in Assembly about this movement in his capacity as the opposition leader. It was his speech that made Mr. Quasim vomit venom against Pandits. The contribution of Arya Samaj was also there. Shri Tilak Raj from Jammu was always with it.

45.10 *Contributions of Intellectual Class*

The Pandit intellectuals associated with journalism in their capacity as editors, correspondents, political commentators put their views on behalf of this movement. The press helped a lot. This help from print media brought the Government to senses. The vernacular press did not lag behind. With the result the Central Government sent their emissaries to meet Pandit leaders but the Kashmiri Pandits leaders asked nothing short of the return of abducted daughter of a widow. The Defence Minister of India Government, late Y.S. Chowhan came to Srinagar and met the leaders on behalf of the Prime Minister. The State Government was represented by late D. P. Dhar. It was decided that Parameshwari shall be returned to her mother within ten days. According to this agreement five hundred detainees were released. But return of the Pandit girl was not made after ten days gap. Pandits felt cheated. They waited for a month more but nothing was done to redress their grievance.

The Central Government played with the Pandit Community. Both the Governments succeeded in breaking the back of the struggle. As a result Pandits became furious once again.

45.11 *Role of Urdu Press*

The State Government used the Urdu Press to invent falsehood. It was rumoured through this press that Parvin (Parmeshwari's Muslim name) had crossed over to Pak occupied Kashmir. After some days she was declared as dead by the same Urdu papers. Seeing all this, the Pandits became disturbed.

They lost faith in the authority and justice organizations They decided to start the movement from Delhi. The Hindu-Maha Sabha Bhawan, Delhi became the centre for the Pandit agitation.

45.12 *Delhi Satyagraha*

Under the able leadership of late S.N. Ghasi, Pandits approached the Hindu bretheren and Hindu Sansthas of Delhi for help. Delhi Hindus responded sympathetically to their call. That proved a moral boosting for the organizers to give fillip to the agitation programme afresh. Late A.N. Ganjoo, Shri Amamath Vaishnavi and Shri. H.N. Jatoo did a lot for this new initiative. Here also Pandit mothers took a leading role. Batches of Satyagrahis would reach Delhi and used to be provided all facilities of lodging and boarding there . They would court arrest on their turns and public would assemble to hear them patiently. Here as well, my sister, son, daughter and Shrimatiji courted arrest. Late Shrimati Nancy Koul, a heart patient did not care for her life and joined the movement at Delhi as a brave soldier. The slogans here were

***"Chowhan Hay! Hay!!
Pandit Kanya Ko Vapis Karon"***

Shrimati Indira Gandhi and Bakshi Gulam Mohamad tried their level best to prevail upon Mr. Sadiq, the Chief Minister, to settle the issue but he always avoided it keeping his vote bank politics in view. He wanted to prove his credentials as a true faithful and sympathiser of the majority community of Kashmir. Bakshi although then out of the Government yet wanted an amicable patch up. In his sincere efforts; he, even uninvited, presented himself before the Prime Minister when Shri Ghasi and other Pandits were given time by Prime Minister to present their case. He fully supported deputationists in this case.

The Delhi Satyagrahis would be kept in Tihar prison after presenting them before a court. The Hindu Sansthaas of Delhi used to arrange rations for Hindu Mahasabha Satyagrahis and also would meet Pandit detenues in Tihar jail and offer them medicines and fruit. Late N.N. Koul did remarkable help in this phase of movement. The Assistant Editor of Statesman Delhi namely Shri. Sahay reported Delhi Satyagraha in his paper with pictures of Satyagrahis. Late P.N. Bajaj has written a booklet about all this struggle captioned.

45.13 *The Pandit Agitation and it's aftermath*

Justice Never Delivered

At the start of this movement an abduction suit was filed with the Session's judge, Srinagar. No hearing date was fixed for the first six months. Once, after six month's gap, this case was taken up for hearing. Shocking it is that the Court was surrounded by extremists. The Court yard, its adjacent lanes and bi-lanes were full with the presence of rowdies. The honourable Judge adjourned the hearing for good.

On this above mentioned hearing day at 3 p.m. this gathering of fifty thousand rowdies was addressed and showered heaps of praises by none else than advocate Mr. Latif the defendant of Law for the rowdies' behaviour. Me a single Hindu was present in the Court.

The real reason for not holding the hearing session was fear of exposure by this Pandit girl against the culprits. She was emotionally attached to her widow mother who had supported and nurtured her in

absence of her father. The abduction always felt shaky to produce her before the Court of Law. Dhanwati Devi had established contact with her daughter through a non-Pandit lady. Parmeshwari was well aware of all the ongoings through the Urdu dailies of Srinagar. She was like a pigeon caught in a trap. She was not allowed to attend her official duty, fearing lest she should escape to her mother's lap during the first two years after abduction.

45.14 *Be Cautious and Miss No More*

This Satyagraha was deliberately presented in a wrong way by Dr. Karan Singh by his unsavoury remarks like these

"Pandit Naukri Mangte Hein Chokri Nahin"

This was the approach of big politicians against the innocent daughter of a Pandit widow. Judged by any angle it has been proved that Pandits have suffered at the hands of rulers of Jammu and Kashmir after 1947 onwards. They have been made target by every occupant of the Kashmir throne. Their landed property, industries, trade, Government jobs were snatched away from them.

This Satyagraha had exposed all those elements. At the end I want to pen down a few humble experiences here. Ours is a microscopic minority. For us every single member counts a lot for us. We should maintain record of our numerical strength and be careful lest we should lose our precious souls. Heads we lose tails they win. I am reminded of this proverb here "For the loss of a nail a horse was lost, for the loss of a horse a battle was lost, for the loss of a battle a kingdom was lost." Let us see to it that numerically we do not dwindle further. Let us keep it in mind.

***"Trust in Shiva and do the right."
"Say not the struggle nor avaieth"
- Sarojini Naidu***

46 Those Golden Bonds: Jawahar Lal and Kashmir

D. K. Kachru*, New Delhi

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The opening years of the eighteenth century in India were years of turmoil. Long before the final and formal collapse of the last of the Moghuls in 1857 A.D., Kashmir was annexed by Nadir Shah in 1739 A.D. In the years of uncertainty and disintegration preceding the annexation, a number of Kashmiris left their homeland. One of these was Pandit Raj Kaul. He was a well-known Kashmiri Scholar of Sanskrit and Persian. He is said to have come to the notice of Emperor Farrukhsiyar, and to have migrated to Delhi about the year 1716 A.D. A small jagir with a house situated on the bank of a canal (Nehar) was granted to him.

Six generations of the descendants of Pandit Raj Kaul continued to live in Delhi with varying fortunes in the troubled times that followed. The Kauls became known as Kaul-Nehrus because of the Nehru-the Canal. A few generations later the original family surname became a casualty and Nehru alone remained.

The grandfather of Pandit Motilal, Pandit Lakshmi Narayan, became the first Vakil of the Company Sarkar at the shadow court of the Emperor of Delhi. His father, Pandit Ganga Dhar, was the Kotwal of Delhi before the revolt of 1857. With the fall of Delhi, tragedy struck the family as it did for many others. Pandit Ganga Dhar lost not only his job but all his possessions. He and his family ultimately found shelter in Agra as fugitives. It was soon after that he died at the young age of 34, leaving behind his widow and two grown-up sons. The third son was born in May 1861, three months after the death of his father. This was Pandit Motilal.

The burden of looking after the stranded family fell on the young shoulders of the two grown-up sons, Pandit Bansidhar and Pandit Nanda Lal, Pandit Bansidhar got into the Judicial Service, and was often posted in far away stations. The brunt of looking after the family was, therefore, borne by Pandit Nanda Lal. He entered the service of the small state of Khetri in Rajasthan and rose to be its Dewan. Later, he took to law, started practice at Agra, and finally settled down at Allahabad to be a prosperous lawyer after some time. Pandit Moti Lal lived with him and under his fostering care.

Pandit Moti Lal did not graduate. He was fond of sports, in which he excelled. He finally took the Local Pleaders' Examination standing first. He now joined his brother, Pandit Nanda Lal, at the bar. Soon after he started making a name. Pandit Nanda Lal died in the meantime. He could not live to see his young brother come to the top of the Allahabad bar, and to start earning like a prince; also living like one in westernised style in his palatial new home, which he named Anand Bhavan. Here he looked after the entire joint family.

It was a little earlier that Jawaharlal was born on November 14, 1889, The first wife of Pandit Moti Lal had died young. Jawaharlal was born of his second wife, Swarup Rani. She was from a Kashmiri family from Lahore. Her people had left the home-land only two generations back. She, therefore, brought a fresh flow of Kashmiri blood into the old Nehru veins.

Unlike his father, Jawaharlal was born in the lap of luxury. Kashmiris in Allahabad, as elsewhere then, stuck to each other, and were proud of their composite culture and their place in the order of things. The Nehru household was a fine example of this composite culture. His pretty and petite mother apart, Mubarak Ali, the Munshi of his father, was Jawaharlal's early confidant.

Kashmiri ladies, unlike most North Indians, observed no Purdah. Kashmiri girls and boys mixed freely at feasts and festivals. Jawaharlal recalls this with nostalgic pleasure and the Shadi-Khana and Nauroz gatherings of Kashmiris, where he had fun and frolic in abundance.

He was initially admitted to a local Convent School. Later, British governesses and a British tutor looked after his education and up-bringing at home. Theosophy affected him powerfully for a time. His father took him to England in 1905, at the age of 15. Here he was admitted to the famous Harward School. Later, he joined Cambridge. He left Cambridge in 1910 after he took his Degree

with Honours. He got through his Law examination, was called to the Bar in 1912, and returned to India after a stay abroad of seven years.

His father, meanwhile, was assiduously looking around for a suitable Kashmiri bride for him. After a prolonged search, he succeeded in selecting a Kashmiri girl from a Kaul family in Delhi. Kamala was her name. She was about ten years younger than Jawaharlal. The marriage was celebrated with great eclat in Delhi in the spring of 1916. The following summer both Jawaharlal and his wife spent in Kashmir - their first visit to the "old homeland". In November 1917, their first and only child, Indira Priyadarshini, was born to them.

Jawaharlal's was a sensitive soul. He was offered Judgeship and even a Ministership by the British. He spurned these. Instead, he decided to join the freedom movement and face all the resultant privations and sacrifices. Not all his father's wealth and position could keep him back. Soon after, Pandit Motilal also joined his son; such was the intimate interaction of the thinking of the two on their lives and living. Under the magic spell of Gandhiji, father and son soon became the two principal torch-bearers of the great war of India's independence.

The first imprisonment of Jawaharlal in 1921 was only a prelude to many more incarcerations later; to lathi blows at the hands of the Police; to repeated confiscations of valued property, and its loss; to the beatings of other and beloved members of the family; to their repeated imprisonment; and finally to a police lathi-charge not only on ailing Kamala but also on the frail and old mother, Swarup Rani. Father and son and the other members of the family gave their all for the country and lived only to serve the nation and help break its shackles of serfdom. The nation honoured their great sacrifice and dedication. Pandit Moti Lal was elected the President of the Indian National Congress twice, son succeeding father in 1929.

Pandit Motilal was a great lover of Kashmir and Kashmiris. Besides, he was an epitome of the eclectic culture of the Kashmiri. He carried on a regular correspondence with Maharaja Pratap Singh of Kashmir in his clear and distinguished hand-writing. He called himself, in some of these letters, a Kashmiri subject of the Kashmir Ruler. He also entertained Maharaja Pratap Singh in royal style during his visits to Prayag-Allahabad.

It has been said of Pandit Motilal that he looked like an ancient Roman emperor. Ramsay Macdonald, the first Labour Prime Minister of England, considered him the most suitable Indian to be the first Prime Minister of a free India. Pandit Motilal died in January 1937. In his last fatal illness, immediately preceding his death, his son described him as "an old Lion mortally wounded and with his physical strength almost gone, but still very leonine and kingly". Kashmiris shared a nation's grief, and more than that, felt a personal sense of bereavement.

Jawaharlal was the hero of us all in the beautiful but then benighted State of Kashmir. His father's name and his, and the stories linked with them both, had become a legend. All of us young students then, took a vicarious pride in the great achievements and sacrifices of father and son for these brought reflected glory on the down-trodden Kashmiri and showed him what pinnacles Kashmiris could rise to.

I was a young student of fourteen when the historic Lahore Congress of 1929 was held on the banks of the river Ravi. Pandit Moti Lal was the out-going President of the Indian National Congress and Jawaharlal, the incoming one. Both father and son had been honoured in succession by a grateful and admiring nation with the highest honour that it could confer. I vividly remember the excitement in Srinagar and the rush we made to Amria Kadal for our copy of 'The Tribune' our only link then with the world outside. What a mad scramble at the news-stand? Our eyes became wet with tears of joy and we lapped every word of Jawaharlal's speech declaring independence as the goal of India.

Jawaharlal was the third Kashmiri to be chosen as the President of the Indian National Congress, the youngest ever. Pandit Bishan Narain Dhar and Pandit Moti Lal had preceded him. Another distinguished Kashmiri, Dr. Saifud-din Kichlu, was Secretary of the Reception Committee at the Lahore Congress. His fiery welcome address was saturated with patriotic fervour and enthused us all.

About two years later, in December 1931, I was deputed from S. P. College, Srinagar, along with Pt Hirday Nath Dhar, later a leading member of the Kashmir bar, to take part in the all-India hiterUniversity Debate in Allahabad University. On arrival at Allahabad we almost rushed to Anand Bhawan to have Jawahar Lal's darshan. The spacious gardens and the verandas were crowded. Jawahar Lal, we were told, was very busy in a meeting inside. We sent in a slip. "Two Kashmiri students from Srinagar come for your darshan." To our great joy and excitement, he was with us in a couple of minutes, leaving his meeting in the middle as he told us. A dream had come true for the two of us. Our great hero stood there before us in flesh and blood; a most winsome, charming and handsome youngman. He spent nearly ten to fifteen minutes with us; enquired also about the subject of the debate we had come for; and repeatedly exhorted us to keep the flag of 'us Kashmiris' high in the contest. This memorable meeting was for us a thrilling personal experience of Jawahar Lal's interest in Kashmir and Kashmiris.

It was in 1936 that the autobiography of Jawaharlal Nehru was published with its poignant dedication. It provided exciting reading for us. The explanation given for the sumame Nehru in the opening chapter of the book is well-known. In Kashmir, Naroos now Nehrus did not, however, have the same explanation to offer for their sumame. Like a hasty youngman, I immediately wrote a letter to Jawaharlal explaining all this and requesting him to reconcile the discrepancy. Pat came his reply pleading ignorance of the Kashmir story and adding that what he had written on the subject was from his father's account of it. A copy of this letter is reproduced at the end. Other books by him followed, to name only a few; 'Discovery of India', 'Glimpses of World History', 'Letters from a father to his Daughter'. These revealed the sweep of a great mind, and the soul of a true humanist and patriot.

The autobiography ended with events upto February 14,1935. It was a soul-stirring narrative. Only twelve years later, Jawaharlal was swo in, amidst scenes of wild rejoicing and jubilation, as the first Prime Minister of free and independent India. With its characteristic grim humour history had fulfilled the wishful prophecy of Ramsay MacDonald with a twist: the son, not the father, became the first Prime Minister of a free and independent India.

He continued as such from 1947 till 1964-seventeen long and crucial years-dedicated to the building of a modem state and a modem nation. It was a herculean task, for the partition had left the country prostrate and bleeding. He battled like a Colossus to build a modern, democratic, and secular India. His achievements were great, His failures whatever these be, stemmed from his intensely human and civilized mind. The world recognised him as an outstanding statesman, the builder of modern secular India, and the architect of non-alignment. On May 16,1964, at the age of 74, Jawaharlal, the beloved of a nation and the champion of the downtrodden and the suppressed the world over, finally passed away from the terrestrial scene of his noble activities. A whole nation, and many countries in the world besides, went into mourning, and millions shed tears of grief.

The Kashmiris felt particularly widowed, for he had a special niche for his "old homeland" in his great heart; and for all that pertained to the welfare of Kashmir and Kashmiris. This was so in no parochial sense of the term, but born of Jawaharlal's romantic love for that lovely land of lakes and mountains, that ancient seat of India's culture, and the exemplary composite living.

Jawaharlal often called himself "a child of Kashmir". He always referred to the Happy Valley as "our old homeland". Many of his letters from prison bear eloquent testimony to this. In a letter from prison, dated January 5, 1933, to Gandhiji, he says, "The stopping of interviews has made me retire a little more into myself, but I have had a pleasing and friendly neighbour of Himalayas. They seem to rouse in me ancient memories of the long ago when perhaps, my ancestors wartdered about the mountains of Kashmir and played in their snow and glaciers." In a letter, again from prison, to 'My dear Nan'-Mrs. Vijay Laksmi Pandit-dated March 20, 1933, he says, "the call (of Kashmir to me) comes from the higher valleys leading upto the glaciers and the snows and the beautiful spring flowers and the autumn hues and the lotus bloom on the Dal Lake", In yet another letter from prison to "Darling Indu Boy'-Mrs. Indira Gandhi-dated March 30, 1934, 'Kashmir is a place well worth visiting and as you know, it is our old homeland and has a special claim on us". Again in letter of

June 15, 1934 from prison to "Indu Darling", he says, "I am glad you are enjoying your visit to Kashmir and are growing fond of the place...What is month in Kashmir? But you can look upon this as an introduction to the place. I hope you have been able to meet some good Kashmiri families. I am told that better class Kashmiri woman have now all taken to the sari. Only a few years ago, they wore the phiran'.

He closely studied the Rajatarangini and whatever books he could get on Kashmir. In his foreword to the Rajatarangini by R.S.Pandit-his scholarly and erudite brother-in-law, published in 1935, he says. "I have read this story of olden times with interest because I am a lover of Kashmir and all its entrancing beauty; because, perhaps, deep down within me and almost forgotten by me there is something that stirs at the call of the old homeland from where we came long-long ago..... He has repeated this sentiment often in his letters to various Kashmir leaders-Sheikh Mohd. Abdullah, Bakshi Ghulam Mohd., Wazir Ganga Ram and others. In a short but beautiful message to the Daily Hamdard of Srinagar, dated July 30, 1939, he says: "As a child of Kashmir the fate of that beautiful land is dear to me and I send my greetings." Again in a message, dated October 4, 1939, to the all J & K National Conference, he says, am continually drawn to Kashmir and as soon as I am able to do so, I shall visit that beautiful country which it is a privilege for me to call especially me own."

In a letter from Wardha, dated June 13, 1942, tin "Darling Indu", he says, "Two of your letters have reached me here from Srinagar and they have made me feel a little hungry for the sight of the valley and the mountains that surround it. But I take vicarious delight in your being there".

Notwithstanding all his longing to visit his "old homeland" Jawaharlal could go to Kashmir just for twelve days, after a lapse of almost twenty-three years, in May/June 1940. He had a hectic time. He attended innumerable parties including one given by Pandit Shiv Narain Fotedar in the Pratap Gardens. I happened to be present. I still recall the animated interest that Jawaharlal evinced in those of us who were introduced to him.

On the conclusion of his 1940 Kashmir visit, Jawaharlal sent a farewell message to Kashmir in a press statement issued at Lahore on June 12, 1940. It was published in "The National Herald". The message was a moving one. It said, among other things, "To the Kashmir Pandit. I would make a special appeal; for I have claim on them and they have on me. Let them play a brave part in the mighty happenings of today and seek not a narrow protection which binds and restricts, but the joy of taking part in the great movements which are changing this old world of ours."

A few days later he wrote an article on "Kashmir". This was published in 'The National Herald' in six parts between July 24-31. 1940. It was in this article that he said of Kashmir : "Like some supremely beautiful woman, whose beauty is almost impersonal and above human desire, such was Kashmir in all its feminine beauty of river, and valley and lake and graceful trees..... Again, "The Hindus of Kashmir proper, chiefly Kashmiri Pandits, though only about 5% are an essential and integrated part of the country and many of their families have played a prominent part in Kashmir's history for a thousand years or more. Even today, they play a significant part in Kashmir. Pandits are the middle class intelligentsia. Intellectually they compare favourably with any other similar group in India. They do well in examinations and in the professions. A handful of them who migrated to other parts of Northern India during the last two hundred years or so, have played an important part in public life and in the professions and services in India, out of all proportions to their small numbers" Again, he says..... I spoke frankly and freely (to the Kashmiri Pandits at the meeting) for having been born in a Kashmiri Pandit family I could take liberties with my own people."

Kashmiris showered their love on him in unstinted measure. They were proud of their Jawaharlal and took him to their hearts. In a letter, dated June 3, 1940, from Srinagar to "Indu Darling". Jawaharlal says, "I have had wonderful time during these few days that I have been here, Kashmir is surprisingly lovely and when you add to that the gift of a peoples love the result is apt to be intoxicating".

The next visit made history. It was on June 19, 1946, when he rushed to the help of this friend and comrade-in-arms Sheikh Mohd. Abdullah. He did so against the wishes of Lord Wavell and some of

his colleagues, for the Cripps Mission was at Delhi. He was stopped at the border by the Kashmir Police and his entry banned. He defied the ban, marched on foot into Kashmir territory, and on June 20, was put under arrest. The Congress High command had to decide on the Cabinet Mission's award of June 16 with Sir Stafford and others waiting for Jawaharlal's return. Azad and Patel implored Jawaharlal to return immediately. Lord Wavell sent a special plane for him and Jawaharlal returned to Delhi on June 22. The Maharaja and his Prime Minister had to grind their teeth in chagrin. Soon after they were obliterated from the scene.

India became independent on August 15, 1947. Jawaharlal took over as Prime Minister and continued as such till his death in May 1964. The Kashmir issue became one of international import. Jawahar Lal stood by it like a rock. Accusations of partiality towards Kashmir were hurled at him. He stood unmoved. In a speech in Parliament, on August 7, 1952, he said, "I am called a Kashmiri in the sense that ten generations ago my people came down from Kashmir to India. That is not the bond that I have in mind when I think of Kashmir, but other bonds which have tied us much closer. These bonds have grown more and more in the last five years or so. When I talk of my ties with Kashmir I am only a symbol of the vast number of people in India who have been bound together with Kashmir in these five years of conflict against a common adversary. Our history and our circumstances have made Kashmir so closely associated with our feelings, emotions, thoughts and passions that it is a part of our being."

Jawaharlal and his great father Pandit Motilal valued and cherished their Kashmir bonds and took pride in them and in their composite culture. The special message that Jawaharlal addressed to Kashmiri Pandits in 1940 is as relevant today, after forty years, as it was then. The modern, democratic, secular India of his dreams has to be built fully: brick by brick by you and by me and by every son and daughter of India, and of Kashmir in particular; a task that we dare not delay or defer. Long live Jawaharlal and all that he stood and strived for !

47 Kashmiri Pandit Diaspora and Social Reforms

Dr. B. N. Sharga, Lucknow

History tells us that the migration of the Kashmiri Pandits from the Kashmir Valley is not a new phenomenon. It has been going on for the last so many centuries uninterrupted for one reason or the other. The large scale migration of the Kashmiri Pandits from the Kashmir Valley to the other parts of the country was mainly due to religious persecution, but at times economic factors also played a major role in coaxing the ambitious Kashmiri Pandits with a sense of adventure to migrate from the Valley, their original birth place, to elsewhere for better future economic prospects just to earn a big fortune for them so that their family members could lead a princely life with all the available comforts at their command.

In 1322 A.D. Zulkadr Khan of Turkistan invaded Kashmir with full fury perhaps with the intention to finish its pristine glory forever and in the process he killed thousands of Kashmiri Pandits, the original inhabitants of that place. He also converted a very large number of them at the point of sword to his faith. Not satisfied with his atrocities and other brutalities it is said that while returning back to his country even took about fifty thousand Kashmiri Pandits as slaves just to extract very hard labour from them in Turkistan. It is altogether a different story that all of them perished in a snow storm on the way while crossing the difficult Himalayan terrain at Bata Ganjan.

Then we also know full well that at one point of time during the rule of Sikander Butshikan in Kashmir between 1389 and 1413 A.D. Only eleven families of the Kashmiri Pandits remained in the Valley when his Prime Minister Malik Saif-ud-Din who was himself a convert (Suha Bhatt) unleashed a reign of terror on the innocent Kashmiri Pandits, but even then he was not able to wipe out this community completely from the mother planet although he succeeded in dividing the community for the first time into two distinct groups known as Malmasi and Bhanmasi.

It is also historical fact that a very large number of Kashmiri Pandits migrated from the Kashmir Valley during the Afghan rule (1753-1819 A.D.) especially in the period of Lal Khan Kattak, Faqir Ullah and Jabbar Khan to avoid religious persecution and other barbaric acts against them. We should also keep in mind that prior to this a big migration of Kashmiri Pandits from the Valley also took place during the rule of Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb (1658-1707) when Iftikhar Khan (1671-1675 AD) who was appointed as a Subedar of Kashmir by the Mughal emperor started mass killings of the Kashmiri Pandits and their forceful conversion on a very large scale. Here we should also not forget that the conditions prevailing at that time were much worse than what they are now as both the means of transport and communications were not developed at all in the difficult terrain of Himalayas at that time and the migrants used to walk on foot under the cover of darkness through thick forests at night to escape detection and to avoid the wrath of the barbaric fundamentalist forces.

These Kashmiri Pandit migrants who came out from the Valley in 18th and 19th centuries under most difficult conditions with no support from any quarter had a vision. They assessed their position in the new dispensation thoroughly and to keep their flock together evolved a system of living together in a group as a community just to maintain close links between them to strengthen their community bonds and to keep their distinct identity intact. As they were mainly service class people they preferred to live in big cities of Northern India where naturally the chances of getting a good job were definitely more than in small towns. They also gave top priority to the education of their children so that their bright future could be ensured. That is how Kashmiri Mohallas in different names came into existence in cities like Lahore, Delhi, Jaipur, Jodhpur, Agra, Kanpur, Faizabad, Allahabad and Lucknow with a considerable population of Kashmiri Pandit migrants.

Kashmiri Mohalla of Lucknow came into existence between 1775 and 1780 A.D., when Nawab Asaf-ud-Daula shifted his seat of government from Faizabad to Lucknow in 1775 A.D. The generosity of Nawab Asaf-ud-Daula and affluence during his rule attracted many Kashmiri Pandits from different parts of the country and even from Kashmir itself to come to Lucknow and they settled down in Kashmiri Mohalla for better future prospects. It used to have a population of about 500 Kashmiri

Pandit families due to which it soon became a very strong nerve centre for the social, cultural, educational and political activities of Kashmiri Pandit migrants.

They very well visualised the hardships and other difficulties which they had to face in the completely new surroundings and environment. So to overcome that and at the same time to preserve their rich cultural heritage and their customs, traditions and rituals they devised ways and means to maintain their separate distinct ethnic identity far away from the land of their birth instead of being lost in the vast sea of humanity. They achieved this by observing strict discipline, but at the same time moving with the times by adopting certain modifications in their way of life.

By living together in Kashmiri Mohalla they had the advantage of organising caste activities and other social congregations regularly that strengthened the caste solidarity among them which helped them to a considerable extent in maintaining caste exclusiveness among the Diasporas by firstly facilitating adherence to established caste practices like endogamy within the community and second by immediately bringing to light any violation of customary caste usages.

For example the displaced Kashmiri Pandits in Kashmiri Mohalla, Lucknow until the late 19th century used to celebrate an annual caste festival with great devotion and fervour known as Rishi Pir Ka Jag to honour a Kashmiri Pandit Saint of the 17th century in Bhola Nath Ki Baghia. Then regular community gatherings used to take place in Ganju Walon Ka Shadikhana to deliberate on crucial matters pertaining to the community welfare. In such meetings the elders used to guide the youth of the Biradari on all aspects of life to become responsible citizens of the society and to make the community a strong well knit unit.

Kashmiri Mohalla also used to have quite a good number of Kashmiri Gurus, who used to perform all the religious ceremonies as per Kashmiri traditions. Raj Guru Pandit Raj Nath Ruggu was the last of this clan. He used to bring out a Kashmiri Panchang every year on 'Navreh' for the community. But now their descendants have left their ancestral profession and joined other jobs. They do not like to be addressed like that at all any more as they consider themselves to be well reformed moving with the times. Now the community depends on local Pandits to perform the religious ceremonies.

What Kashyap Bandhu did in Kashmir to bring about radical reforms in the community in 20th century was done by leading Diasporants in Kashmiri Mohalla in Lucknow in 19th century itself. Firstly to suit the local environment they changed their dress code. Instead of wearing the traditional 'phiren', the Kashmiri Pandit men started wearing Achkan, Chooridar Pyjama and a black pump shoe with a cap on their head. The Kashmiri Pandit ladies started wearing Sarees but in a different style than what the local women folk used to do to keep their distinct identity intact. As Purdah system was in vogue so they also used to keep a shawl over their shoulders to cover their body. The Diasporants completely discarded the social evils like dowry prevalent in the community at that time and took other steps to bring reforms in the Biradari to meet new challenges in life.

All along the Nawabi period, emphasis was given on learning Urdu and Persian languages to secure good jobs in the court. Kashmiri Pandits like Laxmi Narain Kaul Sharga, Data Ram, Kimma Kaul Bakshi, Prem Nath Muttoo, Daya Shanker Kaul 'Naseem', Raja Dilaram Kaul, ancestors of Dr. Uday Shanker Kochak, Lalta Prasad Batpori, Harihar Nath Mubai etc. occupied important positions in the Oudh court. Then Urdu poets like Ratan Nath Dar 'Sarshar' and Brij Narain Chakbast made outstanding contributions in the field of Urdu literature.

Pandit Sheo Narain Bahar took the lead in bringing about social reforms in the community. He started Mursala-e-Kashmir a caste journal from Kashmiri Mohalla to guide Kashmiri Pandit boys of the locality to become good citizens by his thought provoking articles. He was ably assisted in his work by Tribhuwan Nath Sapru 'Hijr' and Brij Narain Chakbast.

When a Kashmiri Pandit aged 40 years married a K.P. girl of the locality half his age 'Hijr' wrote sarcastically in his typical style disapproving such an alliance in the following lines to educate others:

***Madan lab lab ne
'Jo sutti pe daya ki***

***Zara harkat to dekho, is behaya ki
Baras chalees ka tha nausha,
Umr barah thi us be khata ki'***

When La Martiniere School was established in Lucknow in 1845 the Kashmiri Pandit boys felt the importance of European education for better future prospects and about 6 boys residing in Kashmiri Mohalla joined this institution. Their zeal for western education can be imagined by the fact that they used to cover a distance of about 10 kilometres daily on foot in quest for knowledge.

Bishan Narain Dar was the first Kashmiri Pandit youth of Kashmiri Mohalla who went to England in 1884 breaking caste barriers.

After his return from England to Kashmiri Mohalla around 1888 he started giving fiery speeches and took a plunge into the freedom movement of the country and became very close to the national leaders of that time. Subsequently he became the President of Indian National Congress in 1911 in its 27th Plenary session held in Calcutta.

Prior to this Shambhu Nath Pandit became the first Indian judge of the Calcutta High Court in 1863 and inspired many diasporants towards modern education.

Suraj Narain Bahadur who was a sub-judge felt the importance of girls education and in 1904 he started a girls school at his residence in Kashmiri Mohalla exclusively for Kashmiri Pandit girls. He employed European Lady teachers to teach these girls. Now this school has become a full fledged intermediate college and imparts education to about two thousand girls belonging to all the communities.

Brij Narain Chakbast in the beginning of the 20th century established a library and formed Kashmiri Youngmen Association to guide the Kashmiri Pandit youth and to channelise their energies in a constructive manner in order to reform the community. This Association was inaugurated in 1906 by Dr. (Sir) Tej Bahadur Sapru who also felt a need for such reforms in the community to face the new challenges of life. Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru extended full support to him in his noble mission. Chakbast used to invite leading luminaries like Gopal Krishan Gokhale, Swami Daya Nand Saraswati to deliver lectures on topics of social relevance. Motilal Nehru also used to come regularly to debate over community affairs. He used to stay at the residence of Janki Nath Chak who was very close to him. Chakbast also used to write forceful articles on reforms in the community in Kashmir Darpan regularly.

Brij Kishan Gurtu who was an advocate by profession and a staunch follower of Arya Samaj did a lot of work to simplify the marriage ceremonies and other rituals by curtailing vulgar display of wealth. Jagat Narain Mulla did a lot of work to make diasporants refined so that they may be able to perform their social obligations and commitments in a better way with broader outlook. His towering personality was a source of inspiration for many. Prithvi Nath Chak brought educational reforms and founded P.P.N. College in Kanpur around 1908.

Then Kashmiri Pandit ladies like Mrs. Uma Nehru, Mrs. Rameshwari Nehru, Mrs. Ladle Prasad Kitchlu and Mrs. T. N. Raina launched a movement to bring about reforms in the cumbersome marriage ceremonies and other rituals by cutting short the expenditure on them under the banner of Hindu Marriage League.

Pran Nath Pandit who did his M.A. from Sanskrit College Calcutta in 1874 and subsequently B. L. from the Calcutta University and wrote a number of books on Hindu Law, performed the marriage of a widow himself acting as a Purohit as he had a command over Sanskrit language, and also had a deep knowledge about performing religious ceremonies. There is a road in Calcutta after him known as Pran Nath street.

But inspite of all this advancement upto the first quarter of the 20th century, the Kashmiri Pandits used to take meals prepared by Kashmiri Pandit cooks only. Even the Kashmiri Pandit boys studying

in the universities and staying in hostels used to cook their meals themselves. The free entry of other caste groups into a Kashmiri Pandit household was also not allowed.

In modern context whether the approach adopted by Diasporants for their survival was right or wrong is a debatable point. But one thing is clear that somehow they succeeded in maintaining their separate distinct ethnic identity for over 200 years in spite of heavy odds against them. Can we take a lesson from our past history? Future leads the willing and drags the unwilling. The society will always be in danger when those who have never learned to obey have been given the right to command. Moreover, tolerance beyond the point of absurdity is not a virtue but cowardice.

I conclude with the following Urdu couplet of Allama Iqbal who was himself a descendant of a Kashmiri Pandit.

***"Kuchh baat hai ki hasti mittee nahin hamari
Sadivon raha hai dushman, daur-e-zamana hamara"***

48 From Kunjargaon to Agra: The Great Kunzru Family of Agra

G. K. Gurtu

[Reproduced from 'Kashmiri Pandits : A Cultural Heritage '- Edited by Prof. S. Bhatt]

It is indeed an arduous task to encompass the achievements and contributions of a great family to society in a few pages. How much my humble venture in this field will give joy and inspiration and satisfaction, I leave this to my readers to judge. The Kunzru family is one of the few families that I came in close contact with, during my stay in Agra and had the privilege of knowing a little about this distinguished family.

It was Pandit Kirparam who alongwith the members of his family had to migrate from his native home Kunjargaon, in Baramula, Kashmir and after temporary stay in various cities for sometime the family finally opted for Agra and engaged itself in business. It was a period during which to escape political, economical, social and religious persecution, hundreds of Kashmiri Pandit families were forced to leave their beautiful homeland never to return, but only to cherish the memories of their sweet home amidst snow-capped mountains, the green meadows, the murmuring brooks and the rows of Chinar. The struggle for survival, retention of Kashmiri culture and traditions and separate entity was long and tortuous. It was only by dint of industry and intelligence, that the forefathers could carve out a place for themselves in India and abroad. In the milieu no wonder our mother tongue became a casualty. The sun heralding the dawn of return to homeland and a welcome embrace from our Kashmiri-speaking brethren is yet to come up. However the years rolled by. The period of struggle for the family was over. His son Pandit Kedamath before he settled down in Agra, had served the Jhajjar State (near Delhi) as Dewan. By the time Pt. Ajudhianath, the son of Pandit Kedarnath, came on the scene, the family was firmly established, fairly prosperous and had acquired social status. The firm Kedarath Ajudhianath was a flourishing concern.

Pandit Ajudhianath (1840-1892) was born, brought up and educated in Agra. He was proficient in Persian, Arabic and Sanskrit and spoke Urdu and English with equal ease. He was a leading lawyer of the Agra Bar. He shifted to Allahabad in 1869 after the establishment of High Court there. He became the first President of Allahabad Bar Association. In between he attended to and expanded and diversified his family business with acumen, earning fame and fortune. He was known for his penetrating insight, subtlety of mind, clarity of thought and straight forwardness of expression couched in most dignified language. He earned the respect of his colleagues and admiration from the bench.

His interests were wide and varied. His time was divided between professional, business, social and political activities. He founded the Indian Herald to voice his views on social and political matters. He was also associated with another paper Indian Union. He was bold and fearless in his views. Even in those days in British Raj he advocated participation of Indians in the affairs of the Government. In view of his position as a leading lawyer, an established businessman and an enlightened person he was nominated to the Legislative Council of the Lt. Governor of the NorthWest Provinces as a Member from the non-official member side.

Pt. Ajudhianath was drawn towards Congress and became Chairman, Reception Committee in Allahabad. He was a great organiser. He addressed meetings in many cities and raised funds for Congress. He became Joint Secretary of Congress in Bombay. Some of his close associates were W. C. Bonerjee, A.O. Hume, Pherozshah Mehta, Gopal Krishna Gokhale and Madan Mohan Malviya. He was a forceful orator but neither dogmatic in approach nor communal in attitude. He held liberal and progressive views and was persuasive in arguments. He worked for the unity of Hindu and Muslim communities and discouraged the efforts of those who were trying to alienate the two. He desired that both should come on one platform and work unitedly for the welfare of the country. It was his sincerity of purpose and honesty of approach which brought people from different communities in large numbers into the fold of Congress. He was from an orthodox family but he held

secular views and kept himself aloof from narrow controversies. He was respected both by his admirers and critics.

Pandit Ajudhianath took keen interest in education. He was one of the founder members of the Victoria High School in Agra, a Trustee of Agra College and Senate Member of the Universities of Calcutta and Allahabad.

He was a man of social vision. He associated himself with various associations which had been formed to discuss topics of current interest. To save people from debt, degradation and death he voiced his concern against drinking. The plight of economically poor masses did not escape his attention. He utilised the forum of Congress to criticise the taxation policy. He did not approve of child marriage and purdah system. He desired that girls should also be educated. He stood for the emancipation of women folk so that they may also participate in nationbuilding.

He was kind hearted towards birds and animals. He was moved to see sick or wounded animals still yoked to work or lying unattended. He was highly critical of cock-fighting and quail-fighting as a means of entertainment and could hardly bear the sight of people enjoying the dumb birds entwined in fierce combat, lie bleeding or writhing in pain with limbs broken and once beautiful plumes torn and scattered all around. His love and concern for mute creatures prompted him to move a Bill for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

Alas, he left the stage too soon with many a task unfinished. In his untimely death the Congress lost an able organiser, India a dedicated leader and society an honest and sincere social worker. His family and business too received a great set back. He was well-built and of medium height. The flowing beard, the penetrating eyes added charm to his graceful personality. To mourn his sad demise meetings were organised, rich tributes were paid and resolutions were passed to record his selfless service to society, the nation and the Congress.

Pt. Rajnath, the eldest son of Pandit Ajudhianath, by his second wife, was then a minor. He was born on 14th August, 1884. He studied upto Intermediate Class. He was well-versed in Urdu, Persian, English and Hindi and spoke all the languages with equal command. He was an active student during his college days. He acted in dramas organised by the College. His interest in acting continued even after his college days. He took part in games and was fond of physical exercises. He established an Akhara in his house and invited young boys of his locality to join. It is still functioning. He was married in 1900 at the age of sixteen. He was only twenty-six years old when his wife died in 1910 due to pneumonia fever leaving behind three sons and two daughters. The responsibility of bringing up his children along with his brothers and sisters fell on his shoulders. He did not marry again in their interest. This early responsibility developed in him a loving and friendly nature with a life. Numerous Kashmiri and non-Kashmir boys availed of the benefit of his benevolence. Quite a few of them even stayed in his house for years, to complete their education.

Pandit Rajnath took up contract work for a living because his family business had by now, due to various factors, wound up. From 1906 to 1912 he was engaged in the job of construction of buildings. The present house was constructed during this period. In 1914 he established a firm Kunzru and Dattatriya in partnership with Pandit Sharka Prasad Kaul to manufacture carpets and durries. This continued till 1918. From 1920 to 1932 he worked as Manager, Benaras Bank, Agra Branch. In between he looked after and consolidated his agricultural land.

By the time Pandit Rajnath made his public appearance he was well established and much respected. He too, like his father, was drawn towards Congress, though later on he felt disenchanted and so withdrew. The idea of strikes and Satyagrahs did not appeal to him. He subscribed to the view of 'first deserve then desire' and as such advocated hard work and sincere approach. However in 1916 he along with his brothers and like-minded people organised Home Rule League and addressed meetings and organised processions.

Pandit Rajnath is known to the people of Agra as an educationist. He took keen interest in the field of education. He was in the management Committee of Agra College, Raja Balwant Singh College,

Shobia Mohmadia College and Mufid-a-Am Inter College for years. He served as Manager, Thakur Biri Singh Intermediate College, Tundla; Annie Beasant College, Krishna Ashram, Allahabad and Victoria High School, Agra. He was instrumental in raising the last named school to the present status of an Intermediate College in 1966. The present building of this College which stands on a piece of land donated by the Raja Saheb of Awagarh speaks of his dedicated efforts and the esteem he was held in, by the Raja Saheb. It was his keen interest and sincere service to the cause of education which elevated him to the membership of Educational Re-organisation Conunittee for Intermediate Education in 1960. He was also nominated a member of the Executive Committee of Agra University.

Pandit Rajnath served the cause of trade and industry. He had a clear vision about the role and importance as well as future need of co-operatives as an instrument of progress and prosperity. His becoming a member of Organisation Committee for Industrial Co-operative Store and President, Quality Marked Footwear Manufacturers Co-operative Association Ltd. Agra speaks of his interest in this sector. He encouraged handloom cloth weavers to organise themselves into co-operative societies so that their goods could be sold through co-operative stores to their profit.

Pandit Rajnath having inherited from his father zeal for social service added a new chapter in dedicated and selfless service. In spite of various engagements he found time and directed his energies in this direction. In 1918 he founded The Sewa Samiti in Agra. During that period Agra was in the grip of plague and dengue fever. People had begun to move out of the town leaving behind valuables, the sick and the dead unattended. He worked tirelessly during those critical days. He organised relief operations and supervised relief measures. He remained present on the spot to do the difficult job of checking any mischief by unsocial elements, moving the sick to hospitals, distributing free medicines and removing the dead for cremation or burial besides keeping night-watch over houses left vacant by fleeing people. He set up safety squads. His brothers, Pts. Gopinath, Dinanath and Keshonath-too, joined him in this humanitarian work. The risk of catching infection did not deter him from this work. He had the unique distinction of continuing as the Secretary of The Sewa Samiti from 1918 to 1970. He was a member of Viceroy's National Defence Committee from 1940 to 1945 and in that capacity, visited Middle-East as an observer to assess the problems of Indian troupes stationed there. He joined Rotary Club as a Member and rose to become the Governor of the District thirty-six and went to America in 1958 on invitation. He was also an ardent member of The Theosophical Society and actively participated in its deliberations. He was a member of Ram Lila Committee from 1913 to 1926 and its President from 1927 to 1971 and gave his full time to the Ram Lila Celebrations.

Pandit Rajnath was a religious man. But he was not an orthodox. He held liberal views. He respected all religions and attended functions and celebrations of other communities to share their joys. He helped all those who sought his help. He kept himself aloof from controversies. He was loved and respected by members of other communities. He was equally a ease with children and grown-ups. He was jovial and playful in the company of children and grave and philosophical among older people. Though he held strong views on some matters he was always responsive to reason.

A self-made and fearless man, Pt. Rajnath was fair complexioned, well built and of medium height. He was a proud possessor of graceful personality with a deep voice which carried the force of conviction. he was a good orator. His high forehead, long nose and trimmed white beard presented a picture of a noble soul. He wore Sherwani and Chitridar and a matching cap adorned his head. He was almost a father figure to the Kasbmiri Samaj, Agra. He lived up to the ripe old age of about eighty-eight years quietly fulfilling the mission of selfless service with all the sincerity and dedication under his command. He breathed his last in Agra on 19th December, 1971, after a brief post-operation illness. His death left a void in the field of dedicated social service. People of Agra still remember him with love and respect. He was truly a torch bearer of his late father.

Who has not heard of Dr. Hirdaynath Kunziu? Handsome with well-cut features, curly hairs and a medium height, Dr. Hirdaynath, the second son of late Pt. Ajudhianath and younger brother of Pt.

Rajnath, presented a picture of academic grace. He radiated intellectuality. Anyone who came in his contact was immediately impressed by his encyclopaedic knowledge. Clarity of thought, straight forwardness of expression and brevity were the hall mark of his speeches. People listened to him with rapt attention.

Dr. Hirdaynath was born in 1886. He was the favourite child of the family. He was lean and thin in his childhood and very quiet by nature. He was educated at Agra and Allahabad. In spite of his weak constitution he was very studious and devoted to his studies. He was a voracious reader and was blessed with superb memory. Reading was his life-long hobby and he was seen engrossed in books. His only complaint in the evening of his life was his failing eyesight due to which he was unable to read much. He went to England and took B.A. and B.Sc. degrees, with specialisation in Political Science. An honorary Doctorate was conferred upon him in recognition of his services. He also became a Member of the Senate and the Courts of the Universities of Agra, Allahabad and Benaras.

Dr. Hirdaynath was married in 1908. Tragedy, however, struck him when he was only twenty-five. His wife expired during child birth in 1911 and unfortunately, the child also died after six months.

He was greatly upset, and like his elder brother, did not marry again. Instead he decided to dedicate his life to social and political work. Shri Gopal Krishna Gokhale, a close friend of the family, exercised great influence upon him. It was Gokhale who asked for Dr. Hirdaynath from latter's mother for the service of the nation. As such, from 1916 onwards he devoted himself to the service of mankind.

Dr. Hirdaynath joined Servants of India Society, Poona, which was founded by Gokhale. He worked as volunteer during Kumbh Mela at Hardwar, Allahabad, Nasik and at other places. He rose to become the President of this Society. The sphere of his dedicated service expanded. He joined All India Sewa Samiti Allahabad and later on became its President. He continued to serve the poor, the needy and the destitute. He felt happy to be of any service to others. He was a very disciplined worker. He had great respect for elders. He was a man of determination. He never tolerated indiscipline, insincerity and flattery or sycophancy.

Dr. Hirdaynath founded the Sewa Samiti Boy Scouts Association in Allahabad. The idea behind this movement was to mould school-going children into the service of the society. He wanted youthful energy to be employed and some constructive work. He advocated participation, organised camps and addressed rallies. His efforts paid dividends. The movement became popular and spread far and wide. He ultimately rose to become Chief Scout after the death of Chief Scout Pandit Madan-Mohan Malviya.

Dr. Hirdaynath too, was attracted towards Congress but later on withdrew from it along with Shri T. B. Sapru, Srinivas Shastri, M. M. Malviya, C. Y. Chintamani and J. N. Mulla. However, he rose to become a leading political figure by his hard work. He was member of the U. P. Assembly as Independent candidate from Muzaffar Nagar and was a member of Upper House of Parliament for many years. He was a staunch nationalist. He advocated equality and justice for all even during British Raj days. He was against colonisation and slavery. He was of liberal views and preferred discussions to agitations. The conditions of the colonies, Armed Forces and Finance were subjects of his special interest and attention. He actively participated in the debates and always came fully prepared. It was hard to contradict him on facts and figures. His speeches were marked by clarity of thought and straight-forward approach. He could never be cowed down by the high and mighty.

People heard him with rapt attention and in pindrop silence. They were awed by his masterly and accurate presentation of the subject under discussion on the floor of the House. Even those who held opposite view respected him and never questioned his sincerity. His elevation to the presidentship of Council of World Affairs speaks of his interest in the world affairs as well as the esteem he was held in by the people.

Dr. Hridayanath was a deeply religious and God fearing man. Bhagwat Gita exercised greatest influence upon him. He believed in simple living and was always humble. He was a true Nishkam

Karm Yogi. He too, like his elder brother, lived upto the ripe old age of about ninety-two years fulfilling the task of serving humanity assigned to him by Almighty till his end. In spite of his failing eyesight and weak body his mental faculties were clear and sharp. He was constantly thinking of the country, its people and the work that remained to be completed. The concern for the welfare of the people made his agitating mind restless. The end came suddenly on 3 April, 1978. He died peacefully at his home, in Agra and with it rested the body and soul of a tireless worker.

Affectionately called as 'Chand Bhai' by Kashmiris and 'Chand Babu' by non-Kashmiris, Pt. Chandra Mohan Nath, the eldest child of Pandit Rajnath, was born on 24 October, 1902 and was brought up and educated in Agra. He had his early grooming by a tutress Mrs. Fantham. He was an average student but a good sportsman and represented his college in numerous matches and tournaments. He took part in college debates and dramas. His favourite games were football and hockey though he was equally proficient in Basket Ball, Volley Ball, Table Tennis and Cricket. He served the cause of sportsmen by becoming a referee in 1923 and remaining so till 1954, which speaks of his popularity, impartiality and expertise among sportsmen. In that capacity he visited places like Karachi, Jodhpur and Secundrabad. He was very strict and impartial on the playground and his decisions were rarely challenged. He was married in Lucknow on 3 May, 1936 and is blessed with one son, (Dr. Krishna Mohan, a surgeon in England) and two daughters.

Pt. Chandra Mohan Nath began his career as a teacher in 1931. From 1938 to 1942 he was an insurance man. In December 1943 he joined the Royal Indian Air Force from where he was released in February 1952 as Lt. Lieutnant. Thereafter he established New York Blacking Co. in partnership to manufacture shoe polish etc. In this business he remained from 1952 to 1971. However, during this period he assisted his father and did whatever little social service he could do. This was a tradition he had inherited from his family. Helping others came to him instinctively. He joined The Sewa Samiti Agra and is its Secretary since 1972. He is an active member of Ram Lila Conunittee. Since 1969 he is associated with Kashmiri Samaj, Agra. Presently he is Patron of the Samaj. He is an eagerly sought after person on the occasion of social and cultural gatherings and he discharges his duties with pleasure in spite of his advancing age. For decades he has been doing this service. The tradition of helping young boys who come to town for studies is still continuing. All those who come find a welcome smile and a comfortable roof. The poor and the needy, at times, are assisted with a little monetary help too. Since he is a health enthusiast he invites boys to join Akhara. He is a believer in the maxim of 'healthy body breeds a healthy mind'.

Pt. Chandra Mohan Nath is a nonpolitical and religious man. He has simple taste and lives a simple life. To him service to humanity is service to God. He is an upholder of dignity of labour. He loves children. They eagerly await his arrival and crowd him to hear interesting anecdotes told in an interesting manner. Older people also consult him on matters of importance. Distributing free homoeopathic medicines and gardening are his hobbies. Attending to patients or watering or training plants are common sight in the morning. Although eighty-four, he is still active and visits people in the town enquiring about their welfare, offering advice and helping solve their problems besides looking after his family agricultural land. He is truly, a standard-bearer of the great traditions of his noble family. We are sure the young generation will emulate his example of dedicated and selfless social service.

49 Zutshis of Bazaar Sitaram, Delhi

Dr. B. N. Sharga & Smt. Rajni Sharga, Lucknow

We should always remember the fact that a nation is known by its civilizational experiences, which are naturally constructed through noble missions and by the hard work of a few extraordinary persons, historically identified with age and century. Such people who live and die for a cause have always been instrumental in the development of human values and ethos both at the national as well as the international levels. Their qualities of head and heart get universal recognition and one can feel their loss only by adhering to their cherished ideals and by carrying out their unfulfilled mission. One such outstanding personality was Allama pandit Tribhuwan. Nath Zutshi "Zar" Dehelvi Yaadgar-e-Daag who was a poet and Urdu and Persian scholar par excellence.

According to the available records with the family members of "Zar" Sahab, his ancestors came from Kashmir to Delhi during the rule of Mughal Emperor Jahangir (1605-1627). But, some how, they could not stay for a long time in the imperial city and again went back to their native place in Kashmir.

It was during the rule of Mughal emperor Shahjahan (1627-1658) that Lachdii Ram Zutshi again came to Delhi from Srinagar in Kashmir to try his luck and started living somewhere near Chandni Chowk. Shahjahan shifted the seat of Mughal empire from Agra to Delhi known as Shahjahanabad at that time.

It was a customary practice during that period that the Mughal Emperor used to pass riding a well decorated elephant in a procession through Chandni Chowk once in a year. It so happened that one day Pandit Gopi Nath Zutshi who was the son of Pandit Lachchi Ram Zutshi and who was well versed in Persian language was standing by the side of a road in Chandni Chowk area just to witness this royal procession with a great curiosity. To his utter surprise he observed that the man heading the procession was showering abuses in Persian at the people who had assembled there to witness this annual royal ritual probably with an intention that nobody would know as to what he was saying. But somehow Gopi Nath Zutshi could not digest this insult and he gave a most befitting reply in Persian to that man to settle the score.

The Mughal emperor became highly impressed by the sense of humour of Gopi Nath, his witty reply and his command over the Persian language. The emperor then called Gopi Nath to his darbar and gave him some post. Gopi Nath by his hard work and dedication subsequently became a Dewan.

Dewan Gopi Nath Zutshi had a son. His name was Shiv Nath who like his father also had a thorough knowledge of the Persian language which enabled him to become a Raja in due course of time. He was incharge of the administration of a state near Delhi. In some records and books the name of Raja Shiv Nath Zutshi is mentioned as Mani Ram Zutshi. He was an advisor to the Mughal Emperor Shah Alam II (1759-1806 A.D.) The emperor bestowed upon him the title of "Raja" and a Jagir worth rupees 20 Lakhs with an annual income of around four thousand rupees. He had three sons, one of whom was Shambhu Nath.

Shambhu Nath followed the foot steps of his illustrious father and in due course of time occupied an important position in the Mughal Court. The Mughal emperor conferred upon him the title of "Rai Rajan" and gave him big jagirs. This important Zutshi family of Delhi had their jagirs and properties in Delhi, Lahore, Ludhiana, Patiala, Jalandhar, Meerut, Agra and in Srinagar in Kashmir.

Rai Rajan Shambhu Nath Zutshi had a son. His name was Sita Ram. He also became a Dewan. The locality Bazaar Sita Ram in Delhi was named after him where his ancestors had built havelis and houses for their family members.

It is interesting to note here that in some records the name of Shambhu Nath's son has been mentioned as Rai Brahm Nath who was affectionately called as Rai Budh Singh probably by a Sikh mother.

Rai Budh Singh lived a lavish life and squandered his family wealth. As he was having a good knowledge of Persian language so he somehow succeeded in getting a job as private secretary and

interpreter to Sir. M. Elphinston who later on became Governor of Bombay province. He retired from government service in 1809. Though he lived in Muslim countries during his service for a very long time but because of his position he was not excommunicated from the Biradari by the orthodox Kashmiri Pandits. He married a girl from Kaul family of Gwalior.

Dewan Sita Ram Zutshi had two sons. The name of his elder son was Mohan Lal and the younger one was Kedar Nath, Mohan Lal was born in 1812 in his ancestral haveli in Bazaar Sita Ram in a highly aristocratic and cultured family. He had his early education in Urdu and Persian under the guidance of learned Maulvis at home. He was then admitted by his parents in Delhi college in 1829 which was founded originally in 1772 as Persian College and was renamed in 1823 as Delhi College by the British. Mohan Lal was the first Kashmiri Pandit to study English. He completed his course in 1831 standing first in his class. This Delhi College was again rechristened in 1881 as St. Stephen's College.

Mohan Lal was a very brilliant and ambitious person having a very handsome personality. He joined the British service in 1831 and undertook long journeys to Arabian countries in connection with his job much against the wishes of his highly orthodox Biradari members especially Dewan Ajudhya Prasad as crossing the river Indus in those days was considered to be inauspicious with the result that Mohan Lal was excommunicated from the Biradari in 1834 for living in Muslim countries.

In 1844 Mohan Lal visited Egypt, England, Scotland, Ireland and Belgium. He was a guest of honour of Queen Victoria in Buckingham Palace in England. He paid a visit to Germany in 1845. He married about 17 times; practically in every country he visited, he married the girls belonging to the top families of those countries. But in spite of all this he became a highly frustrated and isolated person because of his total boycott by his own community members. Even his close blood relations disowned him. He felt so much depressed and dejected with his life that he ultimately embraced Islam and became a Muslim. His Muslim name was Aga Hassan Jan. He then married Haidiri Begum who was a niece of Mirza Sher Mohammad Khan of Delhi. He died in 1877 in Delhi at the age of 65 years and was buried in Lalbagh near Azadpur as per Muslim rites on Delhi - Panipat Road. He left behind five widows, four married daughters and three sons. He also lived in Calcutta for a couple of years.

His younger brother Kedar Nath later on became a Rai Dewan of a state near Delhi. He was considered to be an Arabic and Persian scholar of repute. He was also an able administrator and used to command great respect in the society.

The name of his wife was Mallaji. He had three sons. Their names were Prithvi Nath, Bishambhar Nath and Onkar Nath. This Zutshi family of Delhi produced men of eminence in the field of both administration and Urdu literature who had occupied key positions in different darbars all along the Mughal period and had a lavish living.

In 1824 Lord Dalhousie brought his famous "Doctrine of Lapse" through which the British very cleverly annexed the territories under the occupation of different rulers and made them a part of the British territory. Under this new doctrine the British confiscated big Jagirs of rulers of different states which were given to them by Mughal emperors. The Zutshi family members also lost their big jagirs under this well calculated move of the British to capture power. It seems that Rai Dewan Kedar Nath Zutshi could not bear all this humiliation and ultimately died in 1853 in his ancestral haveli in Bazaar Sita Ram in Delhi.

In the Mutiny of 1857 this Zutshi family moved to Meerut from Delhi where Tribhuwan Nath was born in 1871. The name of his father was Prithvi Nath Zutshi and that of his mother was Shyam Rani. The Zutshi family then again shifted back to Delhi in their ancestral haveli in Bazaar Sita Ram from Meerut where Tribhuwan Nath had his early schooling. He had a great inclination towards learning Urdu and Persian language right from his childhood days. As per family traditions, he learnt Urdu, Arabic and Persian language under the able guidance of Maulvi Rahim Baksh who used to live

at Shahji Ka Chatta at that time and later on became Sir Rahim Baksh and Prime Minister of Bhawalpur State. This Bhawalpur state acceded to Pakistan after the partition of the country in 1947.

Between 1882 and 1883 young Tribhuwan Nath used to go to Hakim Ajmal Khan's house to take medicines for his ailing father where the famous Urdu poet of those days Nawab Mirza "Daag" also used to come almost daily to play "Chausar".

These frequent meeting at the residence of Hakim Ajmal Khan brought Tribhuwan Nath very close to the famous poet "Daag" and very soon he became a most favourite "Shagird" of "Daag".

Tribhuwan Nath did his matriculation from Mahendra College, Patiala around 1887 where his uncle Rai Bahadur Manohar Nath Zutshi was posted as a judge. He did his F.A. and B.A. subsequently from Government Azad College, Lahore. He studied Arabic and Persian in St. Stephen's College Delhi and then in Oriental College Lahore under the guidance of Mohammad Hussain.

After completing his studies he started his service as an Accountant in Lahore around 1894. Later on he took up a job as a Lecturer in an Engineering College in a place called Gujrat in Punjab which has become now a part of Pakistan. There he had a row over some trivial matter with the Principal of the college who was an English man. In a fit of rage he slapped the Principal of the college. This ugly incident became a turning point in his life as he had to resign from his job in 1924. Consequently he came back to Delhi. He then joined the Indra Prastha College Delhi in 1931 as a teacher of Urdu and Persian language from where he retired in 1956 at the ripe age of 85 years. From 1924 to 1931 he served as an Associate Professor in Delhi University.

Tribhuwan Nath had the proud privilege of attending the special Darbar in Delhi in 1911 in which the coronation ceremony of King George V took place. The British monarch was taken out in a grand procession from Hathi Khana one of the gates of Red Fort and which ended in Civil lines where a huge pandal was erected for this special Darbar on a plot of land where the old Secretariat building now stands. Because the present New Delhi was developed by Sir Edwin Landseer Lutyens much later when the British shifted the capital from Calcutta to Delhi after this Darbar in 1912.

A special railway line was laid from the Delhi Railway Station upto Civil lines to bring the invitees which included about 200 Rajas and Maharajas of the erstwhile princely states.

An interesting controversy developed on this historic occasion if the king himself accompanied by his Secretary of State was present in the country, it was argued then there was no place for a Viceroy too who was regarded as the representative of the king. To circumvent this peculiar situation Lord Hardinge was then called as Governor General and not Viceroy.

It should also be mentioned here that Gurudev Rabindra Nath Tagore in this function presented a song "Jan gan man....." personally to the king which was written by him in honour of the visiting monarch. This song later on became our National Anthem on the insistence of Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru after the independence of the country in 1947.

In the evening a musical performance was arranged in the honour of the king. The best musicians of India were invited to give their recital. In over enthusiasm to give their best the musicians took about ten minutes in tuning their instruments which the king took to be the actual performance itself with the result that when the time for actual performance was about to begin the king got up and left the place thinking that he had heard enough of it.

Tribhuwan Nath married twice. His first wife was a girl from Upadhya family of Top Darwaza, Lucknow. He had a son from his first wife. The name of this son was Dina Nath who was a Radio and T. V. artiste.

Dina Nath Zutshi's grand son Rajendra Nath Zutshi alias Raj Zutshi now lives in Bombay and is working in Films, T. V. serials and commercial spots. He married the sister of the famous film actor Aamir Khan.

As the first wife of Tribhuwan Nath died quite young so he married again. The name of his second wife was Raj Dulari who was the daughter of Pandit Bishambhar Nath Kaul. She was popularly known in the Biradari as Victoriaji. She was also a poetess of repute. Her pen name was "Bezaar". She was a disciple of Nawab Masael. The following Urdu couplets composed by her will give an idea about her imagination and literary taste.

**"Kabr phir mazhabe Hindu mein nahi hoti hai
Kuch nishan tumko na milega mere mame ke baad.
Pilate rahten hain jhothi sharab dushman ko
Laga ke hontonse apne dikhadikha ke mujhe
Who aiye per laga ke muddai ke saath
Jali kati karen baten chirah chirah ke mujhe"**

Tribhuwan Nath by his second wife Victoriaji had four sons and two daughters. The sons are Jag Mohan, Ratan Mohan, jawahar Mohan and Dr. Anand Mohan whereas the names of the daughters are Brij Rani and Anila. The most peculiar characteristic of this Zutshi family is that it produced five reputed Urdu poets.

Though Tribhuwan Nath started composing Urdu poetry from a very young age but under the able guidance of "Daag" he soon blossomed into a well refined Urdu poet with no match among the other contemporary Urdu poets of his times in Delhi.

Initially he started composing his poems under the pen name or 'takhallus' "Shameem" mainly based on romanticism like other Urdu poets which he continued upto the age of 45-50 years. But after meeting Pandit Amar Nath Madan "Sahir" who was living in Bazaar Sita Ram around 1924 and was mainly doing the translation work of Hindu religious books in Urdu his whole concept towards life was changed.

He then started composing Urdu couplets under a new pen name "Zar" containing high philosophical thoughts. Due to his profound knowledge of Arabic and Persian language, people used to call him as Hazrat Maulvi out of sheer respect. He composed over a lakh of Urdu couplets and translated all the three "Geetas" in poetic form in chaste Urdu. The following Urdu couplets composed by him will give an idea about his style and command on the grammar of poetry writing.

**"Mile the Zarse hum
Ab to mar gaya hoga
Tadap raha tha per I
Nam lab per.katil ka"
Phola Phola gule zakhme jigar hai
Saheel-e aabyaari chasme-e-tar hai
Nahin aakhon mein koi bhi sameta.
Bohot oonchi teri nichhi nazar hai
Lagi angraiya lene jawani
Na aanchal ki na daman ki khabar hai
Kamai umr bhar ki zar apni
Yahi le de ke ik zakhm-e-jigar hai**

The main style of his poetry writing was Urdu couplets carrying four lines known in Urdu as Chau Gazla. He always composed his poetry in Chaste Urdu within the prescribed parameters of poetry writing using idioms and metaphors for ornamentation of the language.

The following Urdu couplet was composed by him before his death

**"Ulfat paras Zar ka
kasbe kamal kya
Duniya ko chor char ke
Yade khuda mein hai"**

In 1937 Delhi Literary Society gave him the title Kadre-ul-Kalam Allama-e-fun in recognition to his outstanding contribution in promoting Urdu, Arabic and Persian language.

The Ministry of Education of the Central Government gave him scholarship till his death for his valuable work in the field of Urdu literature.

During his college days in Lahore he used to take an active part in sports. His most favourite games were cricket, hockey and badminton. He also had a great love for horse riding. He had a great fascination for playing Polo.

He died in Delhi in his ancestral Haveli in Bazaar Sita Ram on 7th October 1965 after a long illness at the ripe age of 94 years. A very large number of his admirers both Hindus and Muslims took part in his funeral procession from his Haveli upto the cremation ground.

To commemorate his death a special number of Nidai Itihad in Urdu edited by Warsi Aziz was brought out on 1st November 1965.

He made a distinct place for himself in the field of Urdu poetry writing and literature by sheer hard work and dedication. The enormous work done by him to enrich and propagate Urdu language has no comparison. The lovers of Urdu literature in the subcontinent still take his name with great respect and admiration for his valuable contributions as a poet and as a teacher of Arabic and Persian language. Such great men are bom rarely on this earth.

His son Jawahar Mohan Zutshi now lives in Rajaji puram, Lucknow and another son, Dr. Anand Mohan Zutshi "Gulzar" who is himself an internationally by renowned Urdu poet now lives in NOIDA district, Gaziabad.

(Dr. B.N. Sharga)

Manohar Niwas
Kashmiri Mohalla,
Lucknow-226003

50 Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru's Advice to Kashmiri Pandits

[Courtesy : Naad of Nov.-Dec., 1995]

[Reproduced from the Vitasta, 1981 - Kashmir in 2000 A.D. and contributed by Late Mr. J. N. Zutshi, Editor Nawa-i-Subah, Srinagar]

[We believe that the great tragedy that has overwhelmed us is a challenge, "a tryst with destiny", for the displaced and dispossessed community which was hounded out and compelled to leave their hearths and homes in Kashmir. With our diligence, imaginative thinking and our ability to adapt to changing environment, we have risen many a time practically from nothing. All that we need is a free and open field to nourish and display our talent and ability. This is what we should demand as a fundamental human right for all, especially for the minorities and other ethnic groups in every nook and corner of India.

Our strength of mind and purpose with unity of action, will alone enable us to display the leadership quality in all walks of life which we displayed in the recent past. What we need is an Organisation, a vibrant, dynamic Organisation and a lofty ideal to achieve. Keeping this in view, we reproduce here, the illuminating words of Late Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the architect of modern India, from his address to a meeting of Kashmiri Pandits, more than half a century ago, in September, 1940 to be exact. The advice and the message tendered by Panditji appears still relevant, in the present phase of our contemporary history.

The address has appeared in the Vitasta (1981), a publication of Kashmiri Sabha, Calcutta, and was made available to Naad by Shri M. L. Kaul, General Secretary of AIKS. We are grateful to both Vitasta and Shri Kaul. - Editor]

During his visit to Kashmir in September, 1940, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru had an occasion to address a meeting of Kashmiri Pandits, organised by Yuvak Sabha at Shital Nath, Srinagar. Although it is 1980 now, much of the advice tendered by Panditji appears still relevant today and hence we carry it in our columns.

"I warned them not to fall into the trap into which minorities so easily fall. I spoke frankly and freely, for, having been born in a Kashmiri Pandit family, I could take liberties with my own people. (emphasis mine - editor)

While every individual and group deserved equal protection and help from the State, the idea of special safe-guards for a minority group was full of peril for that group. For such safe-guards led to dependence on extraneous help and weakened the group's spirit of self-reliance; the special privileges amounted, in effect, to little, but they created walls of prejudice which injured the group, and barriers which prevented growth.

Above all, they led to a narrowness of outlook and to isolation from national activities and the lifegiving currents which moved the masses. At any time such safeguards and special protection were dangerous gifts to ask for or to receive. In the dynamic world of today, with vast revolutionary changes-taking place before our eyes, it was folly of the first order to imagine that such safe-guards or privileges could hold and protect. Only strength of mind and purpose and unity of action could give some protection.

Safe-guards and special protection might, perhaps, be needed by a group which was very backward educationally and economically. They were in the nature of crutches for the lame and the weak. Why should those who were keen of mind and swift of foot require them? No one had ever accused the Kashmiri Pandits of lack of intelligence or of ability to adapt themselves to a changing environment. All that they should demand was free and open field for talent and ability.

I pointed out to them what an outstanding part Kashmiris, both Hindu and Muslim, had played in the whole of India, although they were small in numbers. In public life, professions, services in States, in cultural activities, they had done remarkably well without the least help or protection from anybody.

Many of the Muslim Kashmiris are prominent in many walks of life in India. One famous name stands out above all others, that of the poet, Sir Mohammad Iqbal who was a Sapru.

Kashmiri Pandits are more recognized in India as Kashmiris. They have done astonishingly well, although in numbers they are probably under five thousand outside Kashmir. I told my audience with becoming modesty, that during the fifty-five years of the life of the Indian National Congress, for seven years, Kashmiri Pandits had been presidents - a remarkable record for a handful of people who had migrated from Kashmir to the plains below. (emphasis mine - ed.)

So I spoke laying special stress on the need for every group, if it was to count in the future, to throw its weight on the side of the masses, to join the national movement and draw strength and sustenance from it. No group or community which was continually shouting about itself, and demanding this and that special privilege or protection, would make much difference to the future that was being shaped. That future would be shaped without it."

51 The Making of an Indian

Late P. N. Haksar

[Address at Kashmir University. Reproduced from 'Kashmiri Pandits : A Cultural Heritage-Edited by Prof. S. Bhatt]

In the citation which the Vice-Chancellor, has just read out, some flattering things have been said about me. I was rather pleased hearing it all. At the same time doubts began assailing me. I asked myself : What led the University of Kashmir to honour me? Was it because by accident of birth I am classified as a Kashmiri Pandit? But there are many such Pandits. And there are quite a few who are, if anything, more distinguished than I am. So, being a Kashmiri Pandit could not be the real reason. Nor indeed could I fall back on my achievements which are merely byproducts of trying to earn an honest living. Not being satisfied, I have been searching for an answer.

My mind began wandering through the corridors of time reviewing the time lived and the time spent. I thought of the year 1947. In that year, I got involved, by sheer accident, with Kashmir. The involvement deepened. I was included in our delegation to the Security Council. And so I arrived in New York in January 1948. It was bitterly cold. The only memorable thing which happened to me in the long wintry months spent at Lake Success was the meeting with the Sher-i-Kashmir-my very first. The word secularism was an abstraction. It was something in the realm of the desirable. Partition had made me spiritually sick and had eroded my faith in secularism. And when January 30 came in New York, dreams so tenderly kept alive turned into a nightmare. But for the voices of Jawaharlal Nehru and of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah one would have never had the vision restored. Thus at Lake Success, Kashmir became a symbol of hope and faith instead of being a Question inscribed on the agenda of the Security Council. All this is old history. I could not persuade myself to believe that the University had dug it all up and decided to honour me for whatever part I might have played. It was, in any case, a minor part. I was a junior functionary.

I would have gone on ruminating but an idea crossed my mind that the authorities of the University, probably, have affection for the prodigal sons of this Valley. And I am certainly one. But then I must truthfully say that this prodigal son of Kashmir has changed in the course of his wanderings through life. He has become, as Iqbal would have said, a Hindi. And with Iqbal he often sings - Hindi Hain Ham Watan hain Hindustan Hamara. This might be regarded as an act of treachery on my part, made more heinous coming as it does so soon after being honoured with the Doctorate of laws *Honoris Causa*. But I owe it to my new Alma Mater to speak the truth. As I stand here speaking to you, moved by a deep sense of gratitude. I do so as a Hindi or, if you like, as an Indian. And I do not feel any conflict within myself. Should I explain? Perhaps I should.

Some time in the early part of the nineteenth century, the ancestor of mine of whom I am the direct descendant, bade farewell to the Valley. Why he left, I do not know. But he left. It is laconically recorded in Mattan that Sita Ram - that was the name of my ancestor, "Hindustan Gaya." Since that fateful day, he, his children, and grandchildren, and great grandchildren and those bom thereafter have been wandering over Hindustan in search of an honourable living. They had no assets except those which their genes gave them.

After leaving the fair Valley, Sita Ram's first home was Delhi. And from there my ancestors wandered to Indore; some went to Gwalior and some to the old Central Provinces. And from my mother's side, they settled in Punjab. One of them-Raja Dinanath, earned fame and fortune as Maharaja Ranjit Singh's Finance Minister. All this would explain why I was bom in Gujranwala and brought up in Central Provinces. However, it was in U.P. that I was mostly educated.

In the course of their search for a living in the wide expanses of the plains of India, Sita Ram and his descendants had to adapt themselves to their new environment. Instinctively, they followed Darwin's law of evolution. They adopted new languages, new clothes, new food habits, new codes of conduct and new ethics of work. They became Kashmiris of the plains, forgetting even their

language but acquiring new ones with meticulous care. It was Urdu and Persian and then English. And yet they clung to their identity as emigres do. There was nothing larger to identify oneself with. However, things began changing and by the time I became conscious of the world around me, the First World War had just ended.

I grew up in the midst of a vast turbulence. Gandhi had appeared on our horizon. And he grew larger every day, until he covered the entire sky. Simultaneously, Jawaharlal Nehru appeared as a luminous star. Our minds opened up. And our hearts too. Our vision got enlarged. India began taking shape I came out of the cocoon, took wings and fluttered in the fresh winds which were blowing about me. I began wandering over the surface of Hindustan.

I stood at our land's end; I saw waves upon waves of the Indian Ocean eagerly rushing to meet the Arabian Sea. I canoed over the transparent back waters of Kerala between Kottayam and Alleppey and smelt the fragrance of cardamom and pepper; I saw the graceful arecanut and coconut palms swaying in the gales; I saw the lush green coffee, tea and rubber plantations. And then wandering from Thekaddy to Coimbatore, then to Mysore and Mercara, contemplating the beauty of the Nilgiris I became possessive about the southern part of our country as I was of its Northern, Eastern, Western and Central. India thus became a reality and not an abstraction.

On this mother earth of India, our ancestors had laboured and created a fabric of civilisation weaving together its various threads. The monuments alone which they built and carved, and chiselled kept me enthralled. The temple at Martand, the mosques, the forts, the city at Fatehpur Sikri, the caves and frescoes at Ajanta, the Temples in Konarak, Khajuraho and Madurai, the Taj at Agra, the ruins of Hampi-all showed the creativity of our forefathers. And I feel possessive about them as I feel about the entire land so laden with gifts of Nature.

I respond to the songs and dances, the music and the folk rhythms of our country. I am moved by Tagore as by Iqbal; I am moved reading Kural and Vaflathol, even in their translation. The chanting of Vedic hymns and of Zend Avesta stirs my soul as does the haunting call of a muezzin's azan at the dawn.

Thus the descendant of Sita Ram returned to the land of his forefathers transformed. I first set eyes on this Valley in 1968. And I came here to attend a meeting of the National Integration Council. And though I could, even with my closed eyes, see Kanyakumari from Dachigam and feel the restlessness of the waves of the Indian Ocean pining to meet the waves of the Arabian Sea, the mountains of the Valley blocked the view for many. And I said to myself : Oh! So much remains to be done. And it remains to be done all over this land of ours. So many still see reality distorted by caste and creed, region and language.

By custom, convocation addresses in our country must groan under the weight of good advice. But I do not know what advice to give. I am not even certain if good advice helps. We all have to learn from life. And I do not know, if your University and your teachers have equipped you mentally and morally to cope with life and its problems. You might ask : Why I should entertain any doubts on this score? I should not, really. It is a fine University. Your teachers have apparently a sense of calling. You have an experienced Vice Chancellor and a distinguished Chancellor. But then I cannot help observing, as I look at you, that as you came up to receive your degrees and as you are now seated, your backs are turned towards the majestic ranges of the mountains which I see from where I stand. Shouldn't you be facing them? Perhaps, the idea was that you would start facing them as your go out after you graduation. That of course you will do. But the question is: How?

Would you have the curiosity to explore not only the foothills of the mountains but also its peaks? Would you be satisfied only by exploring the ranges, or would you be led to explore what lies beyond? Would you be looking at life with unending curiosity or would you be happy being a caged bird-secure and fed by others? Would you be striving for something beyond your immediate reach or would your major obsession be with yourself? I have asked so many questions. Life too will pose

these questions. On the answers you give would depend whether you prefer the life of a bird in a cage or fly and flutter in open skies and face its hazards.

Man's humanity, his courage, his knowledge, his wisdom and his yearning to reach out for something larger than himself are abiding sources of mankind's strength and of hope. I said, larger than oneself. The continuing strength of religions is that each postulates a God. And God is larger than oneself. Religion goads man on to attain something larger than himself, surrender to it or to merge with it. But supposing one's God is called Bharat or India or Hind or Hindustan. Then what happens? A new religion will be bom-a secular religion devoted to service of fellow men. That religion and God would not contradict each other. That religion will not make one lay an assassin's hand on a fellow human being but to have love and compassion and a striving to create society permeated by humanity. Only a society so structured and motivated will overcome the baser instincts of human beings brutality, greed and selfishness.

How do we reach the new society? Obviously, we must understand the reality we wish to change. We should know our country. And we should know the world around us. Knowledge is a powerful instrument of change. And Knowledge comes from unceasing questioning. It does not come by accepting the conventional wisdom of our forefathers. At one time, the conventional wisdom told us that the earth was flat, that the sun went round the earth, that earthquakes, sorrows and sufferings were caused by God's wrath, that mankind was created, and so on. We know now that all these beliefs were wrong. However, the beliefs which persist about our society are more difficult to cope with. For, in the realm of social sciences proof is difficult; so is experimentation. And yet social evolution is as much a fact as evolution of Nature. Both have a history.

Our country too has been evolving. We do not have dynasties any more though images of the dynastic era persist. We have democracy. This is ensured by the consciousness of our people, of their rights. But as Iqbal said

***Jam-hooriyat hai Ek Tarze Hukoomut
jis Men Bundon Ko Gina Karte Hain
Tola Nahin Karte
(democracy is a kind of polity in which men are counted but not weighed)***

Now, counting is necessary. For all men are equal. And so far we have certainly learnt to count. The day, however, we learn collectively to weigh, we shall have made a qualitative advance. But weigh against what? Against what values? That is a difficult question.

We must learn to weigh every person as a fellow human being whether he lives in Kashmir or Kerala, in Nagaland or in Gujarat. When we have achieved that we shall come into our own. But to generate that consciousness we must create a social economic and political order inspired by equality and motivated by cooperation. Cooperate or Perish - that is the message of our contemporary times both for India and the world.

It is now late in the evening. Soon night will fall on this beautiful and majestic valley. But there will be the dawn. And you will wake up with parchments in your land. And I too will carry the additional responsibility of being Doctor of Laws. Shall we then together begin a new life? And begin it by singing together Iqbal's immortal song:

***Mazhab Nahin Sikhata
Apas Men Beyr Karna
Hindi Hain Ham Watan Hain
Hindustan Hamara***

Thus fortified we shall face the challenge of our times which is much harder than overcoming the mountain ranges and the peaks with which we are surrounded.

52 Allahabad - The Kashmir Connection

Prabha Tankha, Calcutta

For centuries past, religious persecution and political and economic conditions prevailing in Kashmir have constantly forced Kashmiri Pandits to leave their native state and move away in search of a more congenial environment.

In the past the Pathan rulers of Kashmir, having seized power from the Moghuls, were instrumental in forcing a mass exodus from Kashmir. In order to escape the tyranny of the ruling class, many of these migrants came to the plains of Northern India and settled down in places like Delhi, Agra, Kanpur, Lucknow, Allahabad and Varanasi.

Once considered one of the leading cultural and academic centres of the country, Allahabad played host to a number of Kashmiri families, providing a safe haven where they could rehabilitate themselves. The community gradually became an important and integral part of the life of the city.

The immigrants soon learnt to adjust and adopt themselves to the demands of the land of their adoption. They began learning Urdu and Persian, the languages of the elite at that time and became extremely proficient in these languages. Within a short span of time they began to achieve success in different walks of life. The one casualty in the process, however, was their own language. But, despite this loss, they managed to retain their own individual identity as a community.

Allahabad was a city where many Kashmiris came for educational as well as professional reasons and the community produced eminent lawyers, judges, politicians, civil servants, scholars and academicians. Of these many went on to attain national and international stature. In fact, Allahabad had the distinction of being associated with some of the most important Kashmiri names in the country.

The one family which easily comes to mind as among the most prominent in the city was, of course, the Nehru family. Little remains to be said about them that is not already common knowledge and any attempt at elaboration would be at the risk of repetition. Right from Pt. Motilal Nehru, a leading lawyer and political figure spearheading the independence movement, to his son, Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru, a barrister and the first Prime Minister of Independent India, to Indira Gandhi, Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru's daughter and India's first, and to date only woman Prime Minister, they all helped to put Allahabad on the world map. Few can match their sacrifices and achievements. Aristocratic and extremely westernised, the Nehru family, apart from having lawyers and politicians amongst them also included an ICS like Shri B.K. Nehru, a diplomat like Mrs. Vijaylakshmi Pandit former Indian High Commissioner to U.K., and a writer like Mrs. Pandit's daughter, Nayantara Sahgal.

The legal profession in Allahabad was a major source of attraction for a large number of people from the Kashmiri community, who distinguished themselves both in the Bar and on the Bench. Amongst these Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, Dr. Kailash Nath Katju and Pt. Tej Narain Mulla are but a few of the well known names.

Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru was born at Aligarh in 1875. He matriculated from Agra and went on to do his M.A. in English in 1900. Then, after getting his law degree he started his legal practice at Moradabad, finally moving to Allahabad to join the Bar in 1898. He became a Law member, was nominated to the Legislative Assembly in 1913 and appointed to the Viceroy's Executive Council in 1920. He resigned from the Council in 1922. In 1931, he went to attend the Round Table Conference.

Like the Nehrus Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru was also considerably influenced by western culture. He was a prominent figure in the social circle at Allahabad and a number of visitors were always to be found at his residence every evening. His professional mantle fell on his sons and grandsons who followed him into the legal profession.

Dr. Kailash Nath Kaqu belonged to a family originally settled at Javra in Rajasthan. He matriculated from Lahore and came to Allahabad as a student to study law. After getting his law degree he went to

Kanpur to start his legal practice, but a few years later in 1915, he decided to return to Allahabad to practice at the Allahabad High Court and finally decided to settle there permanently. Members of his family continue to reside in the city even now.

Soon after Independence in 1947 Dr. Katju was appointed the Governor of Orissa. Thereafter his career graph shows him holding one important position after another. In 1948 he became Governor of West Bengal, in 1952 the Home Minister, in 1954 the Defence Minister and in 1956 the Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh.

Like him Dr. Katju's sons also took up law as their profession earning a reputation both as lawyers as well as in the judiciary. His grandson, Shri Markanday Katju, who is currently a judge of the Allahabad High Court, continues the family tradition.

From amongst the Kunzru family it was Pandit Ajudhianath who decided to come to Allahabad in 1869. Although the family was well settled at Agra and had a flourishing business there Pt. Ajudhinath decided to move to Allahabad after the establishment of the Allahabad High Court. He was appointed the first President of the Allahabad Bar Association. His move to Allahabad was also partly influenced by a friend of his, one Mr. Tandon, who persuaded him to extend his business prospects there. Starting from scratch in a new business venture both he and his friend went on to become extremely successful businessmen acquiring much property in the city.

Pt. Ajudhianath's interests extended much beyond the sphere of his profession and his business. He was deeply interested in social and political activities, in education as well as in journalism. He founded the 'Indian Herald' to express his views on a number of current issues.

Pt. Ajudhinath's second son, Dr. Hridaynath Kunzru, was born at Allahabad. The house in which he was born was later acquired by the Servants of India Society with which he had been closely associated since 1909 and the society's Allahabad office was set up there.

After Pt. Ajudhianath's death in 1892 the family moved back to Agra. Their connection to Allahabad was once again revived by my father, Pt. Gopinath Kunzru, Pt. Ajudhianath's third son, who, after starting his legal practice at Agra, decided to shift to Allahabad and practice at the Allahabad High Court. Thereafter Allahabad became his home for the rest of his life. Apart from his professional interests and his keen interest in politics and education, was his deep rooted love for Urdu and Persian poetry. He had a prodigious memory and could instantly quote innumerable lines from Urdu and Persian poetry to suit every occasion.

In addition to distinguishing themselves in the legal and political fields, Kashmiris from Allahabad also played a prominent part in the sphere of education. Pt. Iqbal Narain Gurtu was the Vice Chancellor of the Allahabad University, Shri Ram Nath Kaul was Professor of Philosophy and Dr. Tej Narain Shivpuri, Professor in the Science Faculty.

In the area of medicine, two well known names from Allahabad were those of Dr. Jainath Kak, son Sri Sukhdeo Prasad Kak and Dr. Sarveshwar Nath Kaul, who retired from the army and settled in Allahabad. Both Dr. Kak and Dr. Kaul treated the members of the community free of cost never charging them any fees. It was gestures like these which created a feeling of kinship and brought the members of the community closer together.

Another factor which contributed towards making the Kashmiris of Allahabad a close knit group was the constant interaction amongst them, especially at the time of marriages and other social and traditional occasions when an entire community gathered together. On the occasion of marriages each and every member of the community was invited whether he was acquainted with the hosts or not. Even a newcomer to the city belonging to the community was welcomed and expected to participate in the functions.

Social customs and traditions were tailored to keep the identity of the community intact. Thus, marriages were strictly within the community and any alliance outside its fold was not only frowned upon but vehemently opposed. As such, when Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru's daughter, Indira, married

Feroze Gandhi many orthodox members of the community did not attend the ceremony despite the fact that it was one of most outstanding social events of the time.

On all social occasions including weddings, separate seating arrangements for Kashmiris and non-kashmiris were made at the time of serving meals and no intermingling was allowed for ease of serving as per eating habits.

In the past this segregation had been one way of preserving the identity of the community so that it would not disintegrate and disappear in the broader spectrum of the society into which the migrant Kashmiris had been transplanted. The conditions were no different in Allahabad. With changing times, however, customs and traditions have also changed, while many have ceased to exist. But whatever the conditions may be, for Allahabad, the Kashmiri connection will always be an important part of its history.

53 Kashmiri Pandits: Originators of Pahari-Kangra School of Art

P. N. Kachru*

*[*The author is a renowned artist of Kashmir, who was one of the prominent pioneers of Kashmir Art Movement during the turbulent days in Kashmiri Cultural Renaissance of 1947-1950.]*

*[*Reproduced from Naad of October 1999]*

"**The Migrants**"- this is the calling through which the authorities, the media, the publicity experts have stamped and marketed us, the dispossessed and hunted minority community of Kashmir. Being an artist and a man of culture I ponder over this calling differently. It is the migration that has given rise to the world cultures. Migrations have been the very basis and the reason for interaction between the races and tribes which sauntered on the surface of the most ancient soils. It is through migrations that different cultures, beliefs and philosophies interacted, got enriched, intermingled and mixed-up into the cauldron of commingled interaction through which human culture developed and turned the humankind worthy of calling itself civilised. The mighty drama of migratory comminglement of the three earliest sister civilisations, nourished the Indo-Mesopotamian culture. The massive migrations from the North, seeking warmer pastures, resulted in Indo-Aryan or Indo-Germanic culture that gave birth to vedic and the Zendic cultures. The great Indo-Bactro-Grecian culture that mixed-up and thrived in North-Western India and was responsible for the evolution of richest movements known as Gandhara and Mathura Schools which were destined to thrive into the golden age of Guptas. This cultural movement was responsible for infiltration and enrichment of North-India, which culminated into the aesthetic pinnacles of Kashmir School by establishing, now internationally known, the Wushker Baroque. These powerful trends were carried deeply by artists of Kashmir to little and greater Tibets, Central Asia, Mongolia and China.

Kashmir also had its share of migration-in and migration-out of various hordes, tribes and communities. The compromise of Nila with the migratory Kashypa and the regular combined expeditions towards North for the massacre and annihilation of Pishachas over the desert of Takiamakan; twice the destruction of Poomadishtan, the ancient city of Srinagar, by the Toonganees who were the ferocious crossbreed of Mongols and Chinese women, all these are the wellestablished facts of the cross-cultures of our history.

In recent and past history too, Kashmir had to pass through convulsive traumas brought in by fanatic converts of Mongol breed that led to the mass exodus of Brahmins, not once, but several times during the past centuries for adhering to their faith and philosophy. In such migrations there were some talented sculptors and painters who for centuries, had been responsible in establishing the Kashmir School of Sculpture and post-Gupta Schools of Pala Styles in Painting and were involved in spreading the movement to Tibet and Central Asian regions. Under the severe threat of proslytisation, and under the fear of being dubbed as creators of Idolatory, many artists it seems migrated for their safety into the neighbouring principalities of Himachal Pradesh. It was in this region of outer Himalayas where the Kashmir Schools of Arts thrived again and gave rise to gorgeous tapestry of art that became internationally known as Pahari movements, culminating into renowned Kangra Kalam or Kangra School of Painting.

This renaissance of Pahari culture was a post Moghul phenomena when the most of the Himachal Princedoms and states could independently look after their principalities. Most of the princes who had to be in attendance to the Moghul Court and had to eke out the resources of their states in order to cater to the whimsical demands of the monarch and also, had to fill the imperial coffers. This not only reduced the states to penury and poverty but also created local cultural vacuum. Most of the artistic talents hovered round the imperial court for seeking recognition and prosperity. This cultural exodus did a great disservice to the then leading northern schools. The artists got detached from their respective tradition, trend and locale and had to be subservient to the moods and methods of the monarch, besides reducing their talents to mere eulogy and falsehood. With the disintegration of the formality of the figures and the division of picture Imperial rule the Rajas and the Princes reverted to

spaces—all these qualities were imposed with their principalities to reorganise their home-rule. The cultural scene of the Himachal principalities again reverberated and started rejuvenating amongst its milieu and methods and traditions which we vitalised and reinterpreted by the Kashmir Movement. Thus the post Moghul vacuum was filled and augmented with the rich Baroque introduced by a talented fugitive Kashmiri artist family.

This family of Rajanaka (Razdan or Raina) Brahmins swept the entire region with their genius and were responsible for the introduction of one of the most romantic movements in fine art in almost all the principalities of Jasrota, Basohli, Guler, Jammu, Chamb, Noorpur and Kangra. The family swept, influenced and led the movement from 1658 to the end of 19th century in almost all the centres of art activity and enjoyed favourable position with various Rajas of the Pahari principalities.

Pandit Seu (Shiv) Raina was the ancestor of this family who, it is presumed, left Kashmir under the threat of forced conversion, sometime in mid 17th century (1660 AD) and settled in Guler during the reign of Raja Dalip Singh and Bikram Singh. Elucidates Mr. M. S. Randhawa (I. C. S.) "Proselytism to Islam was at its height during the last years of the reign of Aurangzeb. In the last quarter of the 17th century and the first quarter of the 18th century a number of Kashmiri Brahmins migrated from Kashmir to Kangra valley to seek sanctuary in the courts of the Rajas of Kangra Hill States. It is very likely that Pandit Seu was one of them". Even now, as witnessed during the research on the subject, it has been found that there are a number of families of Kashmiri Brahmins, particularly Rainas, who have settled in Haripur Guler as well as in some villages in Tehsil Palampur. The family's origin has been confirmed repeatedly through their initials on various paintings done by Pandit Seu and two of his renowned painter sons Manak (Mana) and Nainsukh (Nana) who mostly impress their name prefixed with 'Pandit' and suffixed with 'Raina' or 'Rajanaka'.

Pandit Seu Raina founded and introduced the "pre-Kangra" style in Guier under the princely patronage of Raja Dulip Singh. The style richly vibrated with an amalgam of Pahari folk and Kashmiri Pala Style. The static attitude of forms, the solidity and decorative brilliance of colours, which imparted the tribal passion, energy, vehemence and depth of thoughtfulness in the paintings. These qualities are basically the elements of Kashmir School which are primarily responsible for the powerful sprouting of Basohli, and which, it seems, Pandit Seu and his two genius sons, Manak and Nainsukh, inculcated under the Patronage of Basohli Raja. As recorded, the most regular and frequent movement of Pandit Seu and his sons between Basohli and Guler do indicate that the father and sons must have been working simultaneously in Basohli and Guier, as the two centres are very near to each other. Besides, the interaction of influences must have worked through the past centuries, because the town has been an important stoppage on the trade route between Kashmir and Punjab and rest of India; and also through Raja Amrit Pal (1757-1776) who was a reputed lover of art and culture.

The early quarter of twentieth century regenerated the discovery of these movements, particularly Basohli paintings which have become much sought after and fabulously priced pieces of art. Incidentally, it was by sheer chance that a sizeable collection of Basohli came as a valued share to our State.

In fact, with Pandit Seu's entry into Raja Dulip Singh's atelier a complete change took place in the outlook of the workshop and brought into practice the style popularly known as "Pre-Kangra Kalani". Later on, the style seems to have spread effectively to other states, but it was most effectively pursued in Guler, Basohli and Jammu. Subject wise, Pandit Seu seemed to have invested his genius in portraiture, which could successfully maintain the pictorial qualities of vertical projection and attainment of dimensions by juxtaposition and interspersing of forms and surfaces over his canvas. Some of his highly technical and dexterous portrait studies are luckily salvaged and preserved in various museums and collections. Notable of them are the portrait sketches of his two sons Manak and Nainsukh the famous standard bearers of the movement. While he was in the employ of Raja Duhp Singh of Guler, Pandit Seu had done some of the masterly portrait studies superimposed with highly sensitive and linear brushwork; such as Mian Gopal Singh of Guler playing

chess (Chandigarh Museum), formerly in the collection of Guler Darbar; "A Seated Courtier" (Victoria and Albert Museum London); "Raja Bishan Singh of Guler" (in the National Museum, New Delhi) and again 'Raja Bishan Singh', presently in the collection of late Sir Cowasji Jahangir, Bombay, the renowned patron of the modern Indian Art movements. Besides, the portrait of 'Raja Bikram Singh of Guler' performing pooja, and a 'Battle Scene" (Chandigarh Museum), the "Dancing Darveshes" (in Lahore Museum). All these are the subjects of a deeper study and appreciation for aesthetics. The frozen attitudes of hands, the solidity and formality of the figures and the division of the picture spaces- all these qualities, as already mentioned, are the qualities and basic elements of Kashmir School.

The three generations of Seu Raina spearheaded the fusion of Basohli and Baroque to the final flowering of the new movement that culminated in Kangra School. This transformation was the work of a single family of influential artists who originated from Kashmir. The family worked at several hill centres. Guier is the centre for this technical development where the family of Pandit Seu settled in its initial stage. Seu's son Nainsukh is the best known and the most 'innovative'. He was employed by Raja Balwant Singh of Jasrota (1724-1763). After Balwant Singh's death in 1763, Nainsukh moved to Basholi where his elder brother Manaku was working and was practising and propagating the new style. One of Nainsukh's sons was working in the court of Raj Singh (1764-1794) the ruler of Chamba.

The ultimate blooming of the Kangra style under the patronage of Raja Sansar Chand (1775-1823) was piloted by the third generation of Pandit Seu's dynasty. It was here that the lyrical Guler style reached a high point in the Love themes of Kangra Kalam. This subject and theme were from the love poems from the Rasikapriya of Keshav Das, the court poet of Raja Madhukar Shah (1580-1601) of Central India. The Nayak and Nayika in the Rasikapriya are Krishna and Radha, the ideal love symbols of God and soul. "Geet Govinda" series and 'Bhagwat Purana" also were the themes of this movement.

Geet-Govinda of the Vashnavite poet Jaideva has achieved its passionate excellence through the master pieces created by the renowned painter Manaku, the eldest son of Pandit Seu. Poet Jaideva was the court-poet of King Lakshmana Sena of Bengal where from the Pala-Sena movement of the Gupta's laid a marked influence on Kashmir School. Besides, as typical of the nature of an artist, Manaku was inspired by the poet's weaving into his songs an eroticism of fascinating sensuous imageries which make the poems throb with passion and above all the word-music which flows like a murmuring brook gushing in a verdant forest. The rich imageries, the pen-pictures of landscape and the treatment of various states of love became a treasure and a rich tapestry for artist to draw upon. The artist's technical excellence, aesthetic sensitivity and emotional vibrations were idealised through the expression of his lyrical drawings, throbbing colours and quiet landscape locales. Some examples of the most romantic compositions of Jaidev and their subsequent emotionally charged transformation by Manaku are worthy of high contemplation : "Oh spouse of the cowherd, caressing passionately her swelling breasts, proceeds to sing the Panchama Raga. "It is a moonlight night almost at daybreak. Birds are still roosting on the trees. Krishna stands caressing the Gopi (Radha) while the earliest pink specks of the morn have touched the distant peaks across the meadow. Krishna says : " The hair is disarranged by the tossing of tresses, their cheeks bear drops of perspiration, the lustre of her red lips is dimmed, the glory of her swelling breasts defeat the lustre of the pearl necklace, she is hiding now her breasts and her privacy with her hands. She is looking at me bashfully and though disarranged, is spreading the light of love." Manaku's rendering - It is a lush green composition of undulating meadow skirted by a brook and overshadowed by a grove under which she (Radha) is poised in helpless nude condition besides Krishna. The excellence of mastery over human anatomy coupled with delicacy of body undulations and ebb-and-flow of curvatures is the last word that Manaku has simplified and translated through the simplicity of form.

The two sets of Geet-Govinda by Manaku- One painted in Basholi Kalam (1730) and the other in Kangra style- seemed to have raged into controversy in the columns of modern art criticism. It was

finally resolved that Manaku, while in the employ of the Basholi Court in early eighteenth century, painted the Basholi set under that influence. This set was in the collection of Lahore Museum which I studied in 1946-47. The second set of Geet-Govinda painted in Kangra style represents the most exalted and final stages of sophistication which Manaku achieved through his experimentation with his techniques and observations. The throbbing and sumptuous colour, controlled but expressive draughtsmanship and the lively set-up of the landscape had established the unique standard for Manaku's compositions. These paintings are supposed to have been painted by Manaku in Guler period of 1760-1770. At some later time this set appears to have reached the court of Maharaja Samsar Chand of Kangra and later to Tehri Garhwal as the dowry of the two daughters of Sansar Chand who were married into Tehri Garhwal family. It was simply the genius of Manaku who could establish the Basohli Kalam and then evolve through it Kangra Kalam wherein he displayed all the aesthetic sensitivities and sensibilities.

Another controversy erupted between the well known art historian Karl Khandalvala and the researcher of Pahari movement Mr. M. S. Randhava; the former claiming that the name Manaku of the Sanskrit verse appearing in the reverse side of the Basholi Geet-Govinda collection, was actually the name of the noble lady and not of the artist who is supposed to have painted the collection. Mr. Khandalvala's plea was that the name does not appear as Manak but as Manaku sounding it to be a female name. However, the controversy was settled by late Dr. Raghuvira, the well-known Sanskrit Scholar, who translated and interpreted the two identical colophons appearing on both the Basholi and Kangra styles. The Sanskrit colophon appears as given below :

मुनि बसु गिरि सोमैः संमिते विक्रमाब्दे,
गुणगणितगरिष्ठा मालिनी द्रत वित्ता
व्यरचयदजभक्ता माणकुचित्रकर्त्रा
ललित लिपि विचित्रं गीतगोविद चित्रम्

Dr. Raghuvira analyses the two last lines in the following manner : Vyarcayad = caused to be composed; aja bhakta = the devotee of Aja (the unhorn, Vishnu); Manaku = through Manaku; Chitrakartra = the artist; Vicitram = characterised by; Lalita = a delicate; Lipi = brush; Geet-Govindacitram = the painting of Geet-Govinda.

He translates the whole couplet thus; 'In the Vikrama year corresponding to the moon, the mountains, the gems and the sages, viz. V. S. 1787 and 1730 A. D. a devotee of Aja, caused this painting of the Geet-Govinda, characterized by a delicate brush, to be painted by Manaku, the artist". He adds further the literal meaning of the whole verse thus: "In the year 1787 VS (1730 AD), Malini, noted for her qualities of discrimination and judgment, and who prized her character as her principal wealth, who was a devotee of the Immortal One (Vishnu), had a pictorial version of Geet-Govinda in beautiful and varied script composed by the painter Manaku". He clarifies, further, that 'Manak' or 'Manaku' is a male name in the hills, and is never used as a female name. The female name is 'Manako', 'Gulabo' and so on. While pointing to the grammatic principal and the gender of its Agent, Gopi Krishna Kanoria, scholar and aesthete, clears the confusion in an easy manner, 'Manaku', the principal and its agent 'Chitrakartra' is enough to establish the masculinity of the painter.

Manak's younger brother Nainsukh took his service with Raja Balwant Singh of Jammu as well. His entry into the court of Jammu changed the entire mood of the tradition. Identically like his brother he had enough to offer to the existing traditions of Jammu Kalam. Observes W. G. Archer, "within this local tradition (of Jammu Kalam) which reaches its height in the portrait of Brij Raj Dev, Nainsukh of Jasrota appears as a sudden mysterious intruder". "Intruder" in the sense that he introduced and prevailed upon the situations by introducing his strong and well organised notions about the pictorial values over which he had a masterly grip and command. His colour schemes and themes were subservient to the Organisation of form and the dimensional planes. In short, he could be put in the

category of formalists and abstractionists who use natural forms for pictorial organisations. He could be aptly titled as Picasso and Mondrian of the Pahari movement. His is the marked feeling for geometric structure, strong colour and vitalistic line. His whole approach is architectural. His pictures are a series of receding and forwarding planes and thus nothing else could be an ideal contribution to the simple flatness of the local style. Compared to his elder brother Manak, who could be called poetic and romantic, Nainsukh was an aesthete and fundamental. A typical example of his planned picturisation is his well known painting of Raja Balwant Singh listening to music. It is a well planned canvas composed with horizontal and vertical divisions of the background and the palace architecture, within which the Raja and the musicians are mere decorations of the broader planning and composition. Another similar masterpiece is "Raja Balwant Singh of Jammu inspecting a horse".

In earlier career of his Guler days and later on in Jammu his aesthetic and formalistic principles dominated the local tradition, while his occasional short visits, under the patronage of Raja Amrit Pal of Basholi, created a great change in later Basholi period. Nainsukh seemed to be a dominating influence in Jasrota also, and being so effective in Basholi, Guler, Jammu and Chamba.

53.1 The Emergence of Chamba School

In the later part of eighteenth century the Samba principality seemed to have been gaining an edge over the neighbouring Basholi. This was the period when Basholi became subservient to Chamba politically as well as economically. This prosperity seemed to be the reason for cultural and artistic rejuvenation, particularly in the fields of architecture and painting. Nainsukh moved from Guler to Jammu and from Jammu to the court of Raja Amrit Pal of Basholi where he laid deep influence of his own style of miniaturist delicacy. Later he very ideally created a style that was a subtle fusion of delicate silhouettes and Pahari colour tones. Thus the element of Aesthetic Romanticism was brought into the Bashoh primitive style. The style took firm roots in Basholi quickly and very swiftly. The door wings made in Kangra style were brought by Raja Raj Singh to Chamba when he sacked Basholi palace in 1782.

It is evidenced that Nainsukh would visit Chamba court occasionally, and later on, his sons Ranjha and Nikka were responsible for the artistic prosperity and the establishment of Chamba Kalam, it being an ideal fusion of Kangra-Guier miniaturism, Pahari purity of colour-tones and element of primitive vigour of Basholi forms. The well-known series of "Rukmini Haran" are a typical example of Chamba School studies.

The subjugation of and predominance over Basholi seems to have been responsible for the emergence of Chamba style as most of the sons of Nainsukh, Ranjha, Nikka and Godhu led the activity of the atelier of Raja Raj Singh of Chamba. Nikka, the third son of Nainsukh, is known to have founded the style in Chamba court but was later on joined by Ranjha (fourth son) and Godhu the second son. All the sons, Kama, Godhu, Nikka and Ranjha were, along with their father, the Guleria painters and were for sometime settled there wherefore they spread their artistic tentacles over Basholi and Chamba, finally settling in Chamba. This activity was further strengthened by the effective contribution of Harku and Chaiou, the two sons (third generation) of Nikka.

Ranjha, the most talented one, remained in the court of Raj Singh from 1772-94. These were the years when well-known "Anirudh Usha" series were painted by him. Intermittently, Ranjha seemed to have been paying commissioned visits to Bashoh where, in the service of Raja Amrit Pal he painted the "Nala-Damayanti" series. This series, though painted in Basholi was the typical Chamba style, thus having laid its strong influence on Basholi tradition. In this series there are visibly strong influences of Chamba architectural forms.

Ranjha the fourth son of Nainsukh, was most dynamic in maintaining relations from Chamba with Guler and Basholi as well. He seems to have been occasionally attending these courts, particularly the court of Raja Bhup Singh of Guler.

A significant collection of Ramayana series was painted by Ranjha during the reign of Raja Ghupendra Pal (1816) of Basholi. The basic drawings of the series were got made by Ranjha from another Kashmiri artist (not in the family) named Sudarshan. This gives insight into the methodology and process that must have been going on into the workshops of artists, where there used to be a professional division between masterdrawer and the painter. Such a tradition of division seems to have been lingering on in the house of the last-known painter, Narayan joo Kachru "Mooratgarh" of Srinagar. The division of work was between him and his daughter. She would prepare the drawings and father would complete the miniatures with colours and the brushwork details.

Ranjha's son Gursahai (fourth generation and grandson of Nainsukh) proved a greater genius in drawing and draughtsmanship. Super-sensitive, erotic and highly passionate themes were the main subjects of his paintings. His great studies in appreciation of human anatomical form and its highly interpretative formation could have been the work of a genius only. He thus composed highly sensitive compositions of nude studies. The "Kokashastra" series also remained one of the chief products of his collections.

Atra, the son of Nikka worked in the court of Raja Raj Singh of Chamba. The inscription over one of his paintings reads the names of Nikka, Ranjha (Ram Dayal), Chajju, Harku (Nikka's son) and Saudagar (the fifth generation and grandson of Nikka) besides himself, mentioning all being in the atelier of Raja Raj Singh of Chamba.

Ram Dayal, the grandson of Nainsukh worked in the court of Bijai Sen of Mandi. Kiru - five generations away remained in the court of Patiala. Nainsukh's elder brother Manaku had two sons, namely Khushala and Fattu. The whole family worked in the court of Raja Goverdhan Chand of Guler till his death in 1773. They continued with Raja Prakash Chand till 1785, but intermittently leading their projects in other centres like Basholi and Chamba. The occurrence of financial crisis in the court of Guler led to the migration of Raia Sansar Chand's court at Kangra. Khushala became the chief painter in the Kangra court and painted a Geet-Govinda series for Maharaj Sansar Chand.

Chetu the great grandson of Khushala (fifth generation) and Sultanu the grandson of Nainsukh, both were the court artists of Raja Shamsher Singh (1826). Chetu's paintings reached the court of Garhwal, but there are indications to his physical presence in the court of Sudarshan Shah of Tehri Garhwal, where he established the Garhwal School of Pahari movement.

The other important centres of Pahari movement led and established were Tira Sujanpur, Mandis Patiala (a non Himachal centre) and Kulu. The Kulu style is considered to be an ideal amalgam of folk and Kashmir style. Some of the fourth generation Rainas migrated to Kulu in the second decade of the eighteenth century.

Surprisingly, the six generations of Pandit Seu Raina produced about forty-six children, and all of them artists who penetrated their genius very deep into the milieu of all Himachal principalities, thus embedding the whole treasure-accumulation of four thousand years into their new home of outer Himalayas. It needs yet another treatise to keep their track in all the courts and cultural centres of the region.

The essence of cultural treasure of Himachal Pahari is the decoctant of human experience accumulated through the constant in-flux and out-flux of human migrations and re-migration along with the shores of Mediterranean, the Tigris Euphratic waters and the settlements which thrived along the shores of Ganga, Yamuna, Sindhu and Saraswati.

It has been time-and-again that this forward human leap had to be preceded by a mighty exodus of civilised races. Thus, the history in this respect, has been repeating itself; and I think to complete the circle the history has again pushed us on the path of exodus to take once again a great leap forward as we did in the recent past.

I think, this is the only call (or should I call it NAAD) of the hour for those who migrated due to the brutal convulsions of our History.

53.2 *References*

1. Wushkar Baroque : Wushkar, a well known village in Baramulla (Kashmir) on the bank of Vitasta (Kashmiri name of Jehlam river) where famous Buddhist Viharas had a massive facade of terracotta creations depicting Bhudha's life. The style, now internationally known after the name of the village, is the culmination of Gandhara-Mathura style rendered with sensitive details (linear) of expression and decoration.
2. The name Shivji Raina is even now a common name amongst Kashmiri Pandits. Phonologically, in Himachal Pahari Parlance 'Shiv' has changed into 'Seu'.
3. The pilgrimage registers kept by Pandas at Haridwar, Kurukhstra and Pehowa do confirm and state as "Pandit Seu Raina of Guler"
4. First discoverers W. G. Archer and Percy Brown.
5. Though in most inhospitable conditions, this biggest collection now lies in the Dogra art Gallery of Jammu. Before its acquisition, this valuable collection remained as the personal property of one Pahda Kunj Lal, a descendent of the royal physicians of Basholi Rajas. It was in 1956 that a devastating fire in Basholi destroyed property of Hakim Pahda Kunj Lal and thus he was compelled by circumstances to present the sizeable collection to the then Chief Minister of the State, Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed who came to visit the town. This valued collection was loaned by the Chief Minister for an exhibition of Festival of Kashmir, of which myself and reputed Kashmir poet late Pandit Dinanath 'Nadim' were the organisers. I felt that this treasure should remain a national treasure rather than a personal property. Pandit 'Nadim' and myself posed the problem to the then Education Minister late Mr. G. M. Sadiq who sorted out the matter with the Chief Minister and thus this valuable collection became the national property.
6. Chandigarh Museum and Indian Museum Calcutta.
7. "Arts of India"- Victoria and Albert Museum.
8. This led to the foundation of Chamba School.
9. God is achieved not through austerities but through love.
10. "Notes on Pahari Painting" by Gopi Krishna Kanoria (Rupa Lekha, AIFACS)
11. Mannakuchitrakarta should be taken as one word in which Manaku is the principal and is its agent denoting the gender. Its feminine would be chitrakartee
12. Collection of Victoria and Albert Museum, London.
13. Now the door-wings are in the collection of Bohri Singh Museum, Chamba.
14. 1764-94, rule of Raja Raj Singh of Chamba.
15. Bohri Singh Museum, Chamba.
16. Dr. Karan Singh Collection.
17. Dr. Karan Singh Collection. Collection: Bohri Singh Museum of Chamba and the Punjab Museum, Chandigarh.
18. "Kangra-Artists", Art and Letters, 1995, Vol. YXIX, No. I.
19. Collection: Bharat Kala Bhawan, Banaras. "The Artist of the so-called Ranjha-Ramayana drawings" J. R. A. S., vol. XXI, No. 9/3-4, 1979.
20. In Kashmir, Papier-Mache professionals are still divided as khuhunmore and Nakash. The original leykhan = leykhun in Kashmiri in which by practice becomes silent. So leykhan (Hindi) > leykhun > suhun
21. "N. G. Mehta collection" by Khandalwala.
22. The "Ramayana Series", "The rape of Yadav women", the "Birth of Krishna" from Bhagwat folio and "Rukmini Parinaya"- all in the collection of Chandigarh Museum.

23. Godhu the second son of Nainsukh along with uncles Fatu and Khushala, took the Kangra influence in the principality.
24. Ram Dayal the great grandson of Nainsukh worked in the court of Raja Bijay Singh (1851) of Mandi.
25. The famous Shangri Ramayana Series have been painted in this Kalam.
26. For the profound in-depth and crisscross forward movement of human culture I refer to great and classic book titled 'The Martyrdom of Man' authored by Winwood Read, and first published a century ago.

54 Some Well Known Kashmiri Pandits of Lahore

Dr. Brij Premi, Jammu

54.1 *Khasta, Hargopal Kaul*

Pandit Hargopal was born at Lahore in 1848. He started his career as a school teacher at Lahore and later at Patiala. His stay at Lahore provided him ample opportunity for his intellectual growth. He was introduced to the renowned Colonel Holride, the then Director of Education, Punjab, who encouraged his literary pursuits.

Maharaja Ranbir Singh was the ruler of Kashmir then. He was a patron of oriental learning and a reformer of administrative system. This inspired Hargopal Kaul and his brother Salig Ram Salik to return to their native land, Kashmir.

In the beginning Khasta spent a lot of time visiting places. This helped him to write his book 'Guldastei Fawid'. Major Huson, officer on special duty for Kashmir affairs then, introduced him to Colonel Hunsri, the Resident of Kashmir. This helped him to enter the Maharaja's court. For some time he wielded tremendous influence in the court, which ultimately involved him in many intrigues. His outspoken and critical nature added fuel to the fire and he along with his brother Salig Ram Salik was subjected to imprisonment in Bahufort for 3 years. During his confinement in prison he wrote his famous Masnavi 'Gopal Nama' in which he versified the condition of Kashmir and exposed the court intrigues. He also composed a poem entitled 'Narsingh Autar' which is a satire on the political system.

After his release Khasta went to Lahore and started writing in the Urdu weekly 'Kher Khah Kashmir', the paper started by his brother. After the death of Maharaja Ranbir Singh, Khasta returned to Kashmir.

Khasta was a social reformer too. He made pioneering efforts in launching a movement for social reform and education of women. He started a school for women and appointed his only daughter, Padmavati as its Headmistress. He also started the first school for boys namely Hindu School in Srinagar. This school later on came up to be known as S. P. College of Srinagar, Kashmir.

Khasta was a good nationalist. He fought all along for the identity of Kashmir. He always craved for the unity of Kashmiri Pandits. He was known as 'Sher-i-Kashmir' during his time. He died in January, 1923. Besides being a dedicated leader to the cause of Kashmiri Pandits, he was a very good writer, poet and a reputed journalist.

He has a number of books to his credit. His 'Guldaste Kashmir' is the first ever history of Kashmir in Urdu from the ancient time till the age of Maharaja Partap Singh, It was published in 1883 at Lahore.

'Guizari Fawaid' is a sort of a long story written in a lucid and simple style. He has some other books also. The fate of these books and compilations is not known.

Khasta was a poet too. He composed verses in Urdu and Persian, both. He was connected with a number of papers, Ravi, Reformer, Public news, 'Kher-Khah Kashmir', 'Desh Ki Pukar' are some to mention. Most of these papers appeared from Lahore.

54.2 *Salik, Pandit Salig Ram*

Born in 1856 at Lahore, Pandit Salig Ram was younger brother of Pandit Hargopal Kaul Khasta. He had his early education at Mission School Lahore and received higher education at Patiala.

Salig Ram returned to his native land Kashmir during the rule of Maharaja Ranbir Singh. He took employment with a Pashmina firm and later in the State Residency, his services were terminated for his being implicated in a case against the British. He was put behind bars at Bahufort along with his brother, wherefrom he managed his escape and took shelter at Sialkot.

During this period of turmoil he completed his two Masnavis : 'Sundar Badanu' and 'Sisi Panu'. He also wrote a substantial portion of his book in prose entitled 'Dastani Jagat Rup' which speaks of men and matters of his time.

Salik attempted to seek permission for bringing out a paper in 1880. This request was turned down. He however started his own paper 'Kher Khahi Kashmir' an Urdu weekly from Lahore. This paper fought for the philosophy of Sanatan Dharm in particular and for the interests of Kashmiris in general. Sahk was a staunch Hindu. Besides writing extensively on Hindu themes he wrote two small booklets viz 'Murti Mundan' and 'Dharin Updesh', fighting valiantly for the interest of Sanatan Dharm faith.

He wrote 'Maharaj Gulab Singh' in English, which he rendered into Urdu also. This earned him a reward of Rs. 1000/- from the Kashmiri Government.

Salik liked the religious Maharaja Partap Singh. He wrote extensively in his favour in 'Kher-Khaki-Kashmir' and other papers. He also started an English paper and criticised the atrocities committed by Sardar Mohammed Hayat Khan, the then Revenue Minister of the State. This made him to quit the State. Salik was later invited by the Residency to live in Kashmir and was honoured highly. In Kashmir he managed the affairs of 'Tufie Kashmir' for some time. In his last days he took to practicing law. Being basically a 'writer, he could not confine himself to practicing law only. He wrote the Interpretation of 'Ranbir Penal Code' in Urdu. Besides, he compiled the interpretations of Law of Registration, Civil Procedure Code, etc.

He functioned as Public Prosecutor for some time. But his first love was writing and reading.

He published his paper 'Vahil'. Salig Ram died in 1929 at Srinagar. He was a great Hindu, a great Patriot, a great Kashmiri writer and poet.

Salik was possessed of a powerful pen. He wrote a number of books in prose and poetry. To mention some:

- 1 . Biography of Maharaja Gulab Singh
2. Danger of Education
3. Shastra Arath
4. Murti Mundan
5. The trouble of Dayanandis
6. Dharm Updesh
7. About half a dozen books on law and its interpretation
8. Kashmiri Reader, (1927)
9. Gangenie Fitrat (Essay and articles)
10. Dastan Jagat Roop
11. Tufie Salik
12. Dewan-i-Urdu (Poetry)
13. Masnavi Sunder Badan.
14. Sisi Pano.

55 Kashmiri Sabha, Calcutta - In Retrospect & Prospect

Ashok Dhar, Calcutta

It is now an acknowledged fact that the Kashmir Sabha, Calcutta has become a Socio-cultural Institution in its own right. What Bengal thinks today, India thinks tomorrow, perhaps aptly fits this Sabha as well. It has been amongst the first to bring out a Baradari Newsletter for almost forty five years; perhaps the first to construct a Kashmir Bhavan of its own; the first to start Kashmiri language classes; the first to start a community Herath Watuk Pooja and develop a well stocked Library devoted to Kashmiri history, literature and culture; amongst the first to bring out annual issues of VITASTA (since 1960), a magazine so rich in literary content; conduct unanimous elections of office bearers for about five decades etc. the list of achievements can go on and on ... The role played by the Sabha to help maintain Kashmiri heritage and provide a meeting ground for the Baradari to share joys and sorrows is indeed commendable by any standards of bench marking with comparable sociocultural organisations.

My study and work assignments have taken me and my family to many locations - from Srinagar to Nainital, Kanpur, Delhi, Lucknow, Chandigarh, Jammu, Calcutta, jeddah, Dubai and now back to Calcutta. Where next, I guess only God knows. Courtesy these re-locations in India and abroad, we have had interactions with many Kashmiris wherever we were stationed and often heard a word of praise for the Sabha in Calcutta and its activities. No wonder, VITASTA keeps receiving nostalgic letters from the Baradari members wholeave Calcutta after a brief stay. One wonders, what has made this Sabha so different? How was this Sabha conceptualised? Who have made it possible? Where is it heading now? I attempted to get some answers largely from the previous issues of VITASTA, which I guess in this era of knowledge and information sharing, can provide a road map for other Sabhas, if they so desire. I also hope that the next generation of Kashmiris in Eastern India (which this Sabha represents) will keep our community united preserving its unique secular identity, especially in the changed scenario of our forced migration from the valley for past ten years.

55.1 How Sabha Was Born

Calcutta has been a home to a limited numbers of Kashmiri Pandits for a long long time. Around partition of India, in little groups they often thought of forming a social and cultural association, which they could call their own. During Dr. Katjus's Governership of West Bengal, many of the Kashmiri Pandits had occasion to meet one another at his place, the Governor's House, on Navroz (Navreh) once every year in which his daughter Smt. Subhadra Haksar used to play a leading role. Immediately after the Tribal raids in 1947-48, there was a gradual increase in numbers of Kashmiri Pandits from the valley and these youngmen felt uprooted from their well knit family bonds, lost in the multitudes of life in an alien land which was hubbling and bubbling with industrial activity handling half of India's total exports.

It was largely this group of uprooted youngmen who felt badly the need of a common meeting ground where they could revive something of their social cohesiveness, which gives meaning to life. Perhaps, after an initial period of uneasiness they would have also resigned to the inevitable, but for a significant development which proved to be a turning point. In March 1955, on the Navreh day, a gracious lady (Smt. S.K. Handoo, wife of Shri Handoo of Imperial Bank) took it upon herself to issue individual invitations for a New Year's get-together to all members of Baradari whose addresses she and some enthusiastic persons could gather. Most people saw one another for the first time. Everybody felt an urgent need for some form of an Organisation.

To make it possible, a meeting was held at residence of Shri J.N. Munshi and a seven-member subcommittee was formed in February 1956 to give a practical shape to the idea. Thus Kashmir Sabha was formally inaugurated on February 19, 1956 at the Federation Hall when about fifty persons gathered together and after adopting the Constitution of the Sabha elected the first executive committee under the Presidentship of Dr. Govindjoo Vaishnavi with Shri S.S. Raina as the Secretary

who was the pivot of the Sabha at that time. Since then, the Sabha has strived unitedly to fulfill its aims and objectives, simple and noble, which can stand out as a model for all Sabhas. These are:

55.2 *Aims & Objectives*

- A) To foster and encourage social and cultural contacts and welfare activities among its members in particular and the Kashmiri Pandit Community in general.
- B) To meet at and observe together the social, cultural and other festivals in which Kashmiri Pandit community is interested.
- C) To provide aid and relief, to the extent possible, to the authenticated and deserving cases of distress in the community.
- D) To discuss problems of common interest and take steps to represent, wherever necessary, the interests of its members in particular and the Kashmiri Pandit community in general.
- E) To purchase, acquire and/or otherwise obtain property both movable and immovable, and receive donations etc, for furthering the aims and objects of the Sabha.
- F) Provided that the activities referred to in Subclause a,b,c & d above shall be construed to exclude subjects, activities etc, of a political nature.

55.3 *A United Sabha*

Thanks to the far sightedness of the founding members of the Sabha, the Constitution has detailed the procedure for membership, sources and administration of funds, election of office bearers etc to make sure that the Sabha served faithfully the interests of the Baradari without giving to anybody a chance to make it a personal show or to use it for ulterior or personal purposes. Hence, Organisation has always remained supreme and personalities have remained in the background as far as possible. The Executive Committee elected each year by the general body of members has always been elected unanimously. To make sure that no person occupies a particular position for a number of year - a bone of contention in many places - the constitution provides that no executive post can be held by the same person for more than two years. The elected Executive Committee meets once a month to discuss issues of common interest to the community. Disagreements are not uncommon but never have these led to creation of dissenting groups, thanks to the commitment of the Baradari in Calcutta to the moral - United we stand, Divided we fall.

55.4 *Blend of 'New & Old'*

"New" and "Old" are relative terms. It was common practice from the 50's to the late 80's of last century to refer to the Kashmiri speaking Pandit migrants from Kashmir after partition as the "New" Kashmiris by their brethren whose forefathers had migrated from the valley since the sixteenth century either to escape the fanaticism of foreign Muslim rulers or to seek greater heights in India. The "Old" Kashmiri Pandit families of Kauls, Nehrus, Sapus, Katjus, Bhans, Dhars, Haksars, Wanchos are well remembered for their contribution in nation building. This group of "Old" Kashmiris by sheer dint of hard work and intelligence had achieved great heights. At the same time they had successfully maintained a good social network and retained most of the Kashmiri rituals with appropriate adjustments as dictated by the constraints in their new places of stay. This blend of "Old" and "New" still exists and it is a pleasure to see Atals, Haksars, Tikus, Tankhas and others sharing their moments of joy and community rituals with post-partition migrants in the Kashmir Bhavan at Salt Lake. I have reasons to believe that with passage of some more years, this distinction of "New" & "Old" will totally disappear.

Once the Kashmir Sabha, Calcutta took a formal shape in 1956, it was doubly blessed. The enthusiasm of "New" Kashmiris was ably supported whole heartedly by the "Old" members of the Baradari. Some of the early settlers even came forward to lead the Sabha from the front as office bearers of the Sabha like Shri P.N. Haksar, Smt. Subhadra Haksar, Shri K.N. Baqaya, Smt. Bilas Razdan, Shri B.P. Wanchoo and others. From the "New" Kashmiris, the leadership provided was

equally rich in talent who shared a common vision for the community irrespective of their social or economic status or Kashmiri language speaking capability. In the eyes of the Sabha, all members were treated with equal respect. Late Shri M. L. Zutshi, Lt. Col. P. N. Kak (Retd.), popularly known as Papa by most Calcuttans, Shri M. M. Dhar, Dr. M. K. Raina, Shri S. S. Raina, Shri C. L. Wattal, Shri M. K. Ogra, Late Shri S. N. Wali, Shri Udai Kaul, Dr. C. L. Kashkari, Shri P. L. Sapru, Dr. B. K. Moza, Shri B. L. Razdan, Shri B. L. Raina, Shri P. L. Dhar, Shri P. N. Tiku, Shri B. M. Misri, Late Shri J. L. Kaul, Shri A. K. Dhar, Shri B. L. Tickoo, Shri Pajan and many others dedicated stalwarts from the "New" Kashmiris provided a right blend to lead and conduct the affairs of the Sabha for many years.

While it is generally true that Organisation has always been supreme and individuals have always been in the background, I guess it will be not incorrect to say that at least on one occasion in recent years, the leadership provided by one man stood a shade above the rest. It was during the Presidentship of Shri Avtar Kishen Dhar, that the Sabha constructed the Kashmir Bhavan and saw a new direction in community social events. Few would disagree with his superb and exceptional performance as a leader with great commitment to the cause of preserving our identity. Wish he could spare his time to play a stellar role for our Baradari on an All India and Global level.

A Bhavan of their own was the dream of Baradari in Calcutta since 60's when a very big plot of land was procured at Sonarpur, near Jadavpur, which for unfortunate political unrest in West Bengal at that time had to be abandoned. A key role was played by Shri M. M. Dhar in purchase of the land at Sonarpur and by Shri M. K. Ogra in procuring a plot for constructing the Bhavan at Salt Lake.

Perhaps, it would be a fitting tribute to dedicate the Golden jubilee Issue of VITASTA to such stalwarts in our community who have helped create such a Sabha and include therein a consolidated list of all office bearers for past fifty years with chronological record of events. Our future generations should know the causes that were so dear to their parents and grand parents and be motivated to contribute their best in years ahead to further preserve our distinct cultural identity.

55.5 Packed yearly Social Events' Calendar

In keeping with its aims and objectives, the Sabha organises a series of social events addressing the social and cultural yearning of most members and for all age groups. There is hardly any month when Baradari members don't get opportunity to meet one another. The events include an annual picnic, various competitions in games and sports for children, functions on Shivratri, Navreh, Roop Bhavani Day, Jestha Ashtami, Zangtrai, Gazals Night, Dance and Music competitions for children and many others. Shri B. M. Misri has been playing a key role in these events. Smt. Shakti Kaul and Shri L. N. Kaul together with Shri Rakesh Kaul are conspicuous by the dedicated contributions they make towards the administration of Kashmir Bhavan and the hospitality that is provided over here.

It is common practice now to perform marriage, Yugnopavit and other social functions as per traditional Kashmiri rituals at the Kashmir Bhavan by most Baradari members.

55.6 VITASTA - keeps all in touch

Annual issue of VITASTA is one of the most sought after literary rich publication brought out by any KP association. The annual numbers have in addition been able to raise significant revenue for the activities of the Sabha. Well focussed numbers like Bahar-i-Kashmir, Homage to Nehru, Homage to Indira Gandhi, Martand, Kashmir 2000, Kashmir Bhavan - Three Numbers, Preserving Kashmiri Pandit Identity, Contribution of Kashmiri Pandits to Indian Culture, and now Kashyap Bandhu Number are some of the Collector Numbers issued by the Sabha. These numbers have raised necessary finance for running the activities of Sabha and provide capital to part finance construction of the Kashmir Bhavan at Salt Lake.

While Shri S.S. Raina, Dr. Chaman Lal Kashkari, Dr. M.K. Raina, Smt. Mohini Raina and others played a key role in editing the annual numbers in early years, a noteworthy contribution has been that of Dr. B.K. Moza in editing the annual numbers consistently for decades and raising the level of

this magazine to such heights of literary acclaim. In addition, he has inspired younger generation (M. K. Kaul), Anjali Razdan, Anju Munshi, Vivek Kaul, Rajiv Sapru, Jyoti Sapru, Ashok Dhar and others) to undertake editing work for the magazine from time to time. For editing the Devanagiri section comprising of Hindi and Kashmiri languages, a key played by Shri M.K. Ogra in early years has been followed consistently for many years by Smt. Niva Kaul with great finesse. The contribution of husband-wife editorial team of Smt. Jyoti and Shri Rajiv Sapru of Monthly Issues of VITASTA is remarkable. The Quiz competition run through this Monthly is a great hit with children.

55.7 *Kashmir Sabha Trust to support the needy*

With whatever resources that could have been raised, the Baradari has always stood ahead in helping the needy amongst us. Be it help for a kidney transplant or help in gaining employment or sending contributions to help the recent group of migrants from Kashmir or activities of the All India Kashmir Samaj and its other affiliated units, All members have tried to make contributions, big or small, to show their concern and solidarity for the welfare of the Baradari.

55.8 *Looking ahead*

It is a matter of great satisfaction that our Baradari today has formed similar organised groups at the places of their chosen stay all over the world. Many changes are inevitable with the changed world order and the speed with which we will observe, orient, decide and act to find ways of preserving our cultural heritage and identity will decide our existence as a distinct cultural group. These little groups can use their collective wisdom to decide best ways forward to preserve our identity in their chosen places of stay. Of course an umbrella Organisation of all such Groups with their total support and active involvement can be a great cohesive force. Fortunately, despite being dispersed in far-flung areas in India and abroad, the Baradari has displayed a unique resilience to face calamities with all its might.

There is no community without its share of doubting Thomases and our community cannot claim to be any exception to the rule. A culture of applause for whoever makes any token contribution can in such predicaments help us all. We should have reasons to believe that our community will have a bright future ahead, be it in social, cultural or economic fronts. We need to put on Yellow Hats of optimism and work to help needy ones amongst us.

Sabhas have come to stay and transform the inner urges and cumulative beliefs of our community gathered through six thousand years of history. They should provide a link between the present generation with the generations gone by. If we want that the view we hold of our culture should be understood and appreciated by others, we have got to establish some kind of harmony between it and the outside expression in our actual living and that is what I guess is being so successfully done by the Sabha in Calcutta. I am confident that the next generation of Kashmiris in Eastern India (which this Sabha represents) will keep our community united, preserving its unique homogeneous identity, especially in the changed scenario of our forced migration from the valley for past ten years. Looking ahead, I have full hope that Kashmir Sabha, Calcutta will prosper with the blessings of Mata Kshir Bhavani along with other Sabhas of our Baradari elsewhere.

56 Contribution of Kashmiri Pandits to the Birth and Growth of Banaras Hindu University

Major S. L. Dar, Retired Registrar, BHU

[Reproduced from 'Kashmiri Pandits : A Cultural Heritage' - Edited by Prof. S. Bhatt]

When we think of the contribution of Kashmiri Pandits in the birth and growth of the Banaras Hindu University, the first person who comes in our minds is Pandit Ajudhia Nath who was known as the 'Lion of the N. W. Provinces' later known as Uttar Pradesh. Pandit Ajudhia Nath was one of the leaders of the High Court Bar at Allahabad, a member of the Provincial Legislative Council and a leader of the Congress movement. The 'Father of the Congress', Mr. A.O. Hume described him as follows:

"By descent a Kashmiri Brahmin, a man of large means, a member of the Legislative Council, the most distinguished legal practitioner-probably in the United Provinces-and unquestionably the leader of his own section of the bar, he is with it a most cautious man, deliberating long in every case before he moves. He actually considered over our aims and objects and pondered over our methods for nearly two years before he concluded that he owed it to his country to join our movement."

Pandit Ajudhia Nath was the Jt. General Secretary of the Indian National Congress from December 1890 till his death in August/September 1892.

As is well known, Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya made his maiden speech before the distinguished assembly of national leaders in the Calcutta session of the Congress held in December 1886 and came to be regarded as a national leader from them. Like all other eminent leaders, Pandit Ajudhia Nath was also greatly impressed by Pandit Madan Malaviya and took him under his wings. Malaviyaji was closely associated with Pandit Ajudhia Nath not only in the work of the Indian National Congress, but he came into contact with Pandit Ajudhia Nath at Muir Central College, Allahabad, where Pandit Ajudhia Nath was Professor of Law, Malaviyaji also joined as Assistant Editor of the English daily 'Indian Opinion' of which Pandit Ajudhia Nath was the Editor. Thus, Pandit Ajudhia Nath had an important part in moulding the life of Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviyaji. As Malaviyaji himself had stated once that he had not come across a more impressive personality than Pandit Ajudhia Nath in the whole of his life.

The idea of a Hindu University was mooted by Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya in the year 1904. Pandit Ajudhia Nath passed away many years before that date and so it cannot be said that he made any direct contribution to the establishment of the Hindu University. Nevertheless, it would not be incorrect to say that Pandit Ajudhia Nath played an effective role in moulding the life of Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya and in developing his ideas out of which was also born the Banaras Hindu University.

The Hindu University movement started in full swing in 1911. One of the persons who immediately joined the movement with Malaviyaji was Pandit Iqbal Narain Gurtu. Pandit Gurtu was a student of the Muir Central College, Allahabad. During that period he used to go to Malaviyaji almost every week for inspiration and guidance. When the Central Hindu College was established in Varanasi in 1898, Pandit Gurtu came in close contact with Dr. Mrs. Annie Besant and he associated himself with the Theosophical Society. He also served as the Headmaster of the Central Hindu School from 1908 to 1913. Responding to the call of Malaviyaji, he joined the deputations organised for collecting funds for the Hindu University. The very first public meeting in support of the Hindu University which was held at Kheri on the 21st May 1911 was addressed by Gurtuji also. Subsequently when the Hindu University Society was established and registered under Act XXI of 1860, in December 1911, the Committee of Management to whom the management of the affairs of the society was entrusted, included Gurtuji as one of the Honorary Joint Secretaries,

Later due to his other occupations, Gurtuji was away from Varanasi. He had to take up the office of the Vice-Chancellor of the Allahabad University which he held from 1932 to 1938; but during all

these years, his connection with the University continued. In 1939 Malaviyaji retired from the Vice-Chancellorship of the Hindu University and Dr. S. Radhakrishnan took charge of the University at its Vice-Chancellor. Malaviyaji then approached Gurtuji to accept the Pro Vice-Chancellorship of the University. Malaviyaji felt that being an eminent educational and public worker for over forty years, rich with experience, endowed with learning and alive to the sense of duty, Pandit Gurtuji's joining the University as its Pro. Vice-Chancellor with Dr. Radhakrishnan as Vice-Chancellor, would yield good results in the growth and development of the University. It was a great satisfaction to all concerned that Gurtuji responded to the request of Malaviyaji and accepted his proposal. So at the meeting of the Court of the B. H. U. held on 30th November 1940, on the motion of Malaviyaji, Gurtuji was unanimously elected as the Pro. Vice-Chancellor of the University. Owing to certain personal preoccupations Gurtuji could not take up the office immediately. He actually assumed charge of the office in April 1941 and served the University as its Pro. Vice-Chancellor till the beginning of April 1944. Gurtuji's services as the Pro. Vice-Chancellor of the University, particularly during the August 1942 national movement, are memorable. In recognition of his great and devoted services the University conferred upon him the Honorary Degree of D-Litt. in 1946. During his lifetime the University named one of the hostels after him, as Iqbal Narain Gurtu Hostel, which now perpetuates his memory in the University.

Pandit Gurtu also served the University as its Honorary Treasurer from December 1945 to December 1947 and rendered outstanding services in that capacity also in safeguarding the interests of the University in every possible manner.

All the services of Pandit Gurtu were not only purely honorary but he also made his personal donations to the University for the endowment of a scholarship.

Pandit Motilal Nehru was an elected member of the first University Court constituted in 1916.

Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru was another stalwart who was associated with the University from the days the Hindu University Society was established in 1911. He was a member of the Committee of the Management of the Society, later a member of the Court of the University, Dean of the Faculty of Law from 1919 to 1920 and again from 1924 to 1938. The eminent position that he held in the country helped the University in many ways. He was awarded the Honorary degree of D-Litt. by B. H. U. in 1937.

His son, justice P. N. Sapru, was also a member of the Court for a number of years and rendered valuable services to the University.

Next to the services of Pandit Gurtu, we can mention only those of Pandit Hriday Nath Kunzru, who was Member of the Court, Executive Council etc., till the end of his life.

During his student life itself Pandit Hriday Nath Kunzru took a vow to serve under the leadership of Gopal Gokhale and threw himself in the service of the nation. He was a member of the Indian National Congress also, but in 1920 he left the Congress and joined the Liberal Party. The services rendered by Pandit Kunzru to the country in various fields - educational, political and social - are so great that they cannot be mentioned in this small article. The 'Indian Council of World Affairs' and 'Indian School of International Studies' are his creation. He was also the President of the Servants of India Society from 1936 till the end of his life.

Kunzruji came in contact with Malaviyaji in 1908 and since then he was a great source of strength to Malaviyaji in every work that he undertook. He contributed to the growth and development of the Hindu University in several ways. In recognition of his valuable services, the University conferred upon him the Honorary degree of D-Litt. in 1955.

Pandit Gopi Nath Kunzru, younger brother of Pandit Hriday Nath Kunzru was also an active worker of the University. He first joined as a Secretary of the Vice-Chancellor, Malaviyaji, and served the University in that capacity for some years. He later continued as a member of the Court, Executive Council and various other bodies of the University and took keen interest in its affairs. He was also the

Legal Adviser of the University in the Courts. He was ably assisted by Shri A. N. Kaul, Advocate in legal matters. Shri Kaul looked after the work with great devotion.

Pandit Kailash Nath Katju was a member of the Court and other bodies of the University for a number of years and in that capacity he rendered valuable services in recognition of which, the University conferred upon him the Honorary degree of LL.D. in 1950.

Pandit Raghunandan Lal Dar was a member of the court from the Donors' Constituency (nominated by the Maharaja of Kashmir) and he rendered valuable services. His very presence in the University campus radiated a spiritual atmosphere.

The first Registrar of the University was Pandit Manohar Lal Zutshi who held this office from July 1917 till he was asked to take over as Principal of the Teachers' Training College in July 1918.

The University was fortunate in getting Pandit Brij Narain Gurtu as the Registrar but in order to satisfy the requirement of the Statutes he was offered an honorarium of Re. 1/- per month. His appointment was made for a term of five years, but circumstances deprived the University of the services of such a devoted worker, much before the expiry of his term.

Shri B. K. Zutshi, son of Pandit Manoharlal Zutshi, was the Assistant Registrar of the University for a number of years before he left for Baroda where he joined as Registrar, S. C. University.

Major S. L. Dar was the Registrar of the University from September 1955 to August 1967, the longest period anyone held that office in the University. He carried on the functions of his office with dignity in the midst of tremendous difficulties and served the University with single-minded devotion. The University made all round progress during this period.

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru became an alumnus of the University in 1946 when the University conferred the Honorary Degree of D-Litt, on him. As the Prime Minister of India, he did not leave any stone unturned to bring glory to the University.

Pandit K. K. Shukia was the Headmaster of the Central Hindu School (which was nurtured by eminent persons including Pt. Iqbal Narain Gurtu) from 1921 to 1923.

Prof. P. N. Razdan held the office of the Principal, Teachers' Training College and of the Central Hindu School.

Pandit K. L. Kitchlu was the Headmaster of the Central Hindu School for a number of years.

Shri R. N. Zandhole served the University as Secretary, Estimates Committee, for a number of years, during the Vice-Chancellorship of Mahamana Malaviyaji.

Pandit T. N. Munshi was the Superintendent of the Hostels at Kamachha.

Last, but not the least was Dr. Moti Lal Dhar, who was the Vice-Chancellor of the University from 2-2-1977 to 15-12-1977. After serving with distinction as the Director of the Central Drug Institute at Lucknow, Dr. Dhar joined the University as Vice-Chancellor. But unfortunately for personal reasons he could not stay at Banaras for long and the University was deprived of the services of an eminent scientist.

We have not mentioned here the contribution made to the University by the Kashmiri Pandits on the teaching-staff of the University. Some of the teachers have held other offices also and have rendered yeomen services to the University. The first name to mention in this connection is that of Prof. P. N. Kaula, who was the Librarian of the University for a long period. Being an outstanding person in his field, his services were more required as a Professor of Library Science. The University Library made a significant progress during the period Prof. Kaula held the office of the University Librarian.

Professor B. B. Dhar held the office of Chief Proctor and Head of the Department of Mining, and is currently Director of the

57 *The Snow is Calling*

Ramesh Manwati, Noida

The winter has set in.
I am about to arrive but where are you?
I yearn to see you again,
I am calling you, oh! Pandit
Do you hear me?
Ten long painful years, we have not met.
Aren't you ready to return as yet?
Have you forgotten?
On the onset of the winter,
you waited for my arrival with a bated breath.
And on my arrival from the heavens above,
within the warmth of your ancestral homes,
peeping through the doors and
through the windows - partly open,
you gazed at me as if I were a new bride,
taking a sip of hot 'Kehwa' or 'Sheeri-chaay'
with a 'Garm-Garm' 'Taeil-Waroo', or
with it, even some enjoying 'Sattoo',
with a warm 'Kangri' beneath your 'Pheran'.
Even 'Nav Sheen' you celebrated
with the choicest of your dishes.
Children playfully-singing,
"Sheena Petto-Petto, Maama Itto-Itto".
Stray dogs dancing merrily, here and there,
on the roads and in streets, as if
welcoming my arrival.
Finding it difficult, though,
to move about, yet
my cool but peaceful white cover, all around,
you enjoyed and cherished too.
I too enjoyed, mind you,
your rolling me in the gardens
and in open fields. And even
the 'Sheenn Jung' with your nears and dears.
I have not forgotten, how can you?
Holding back the tears,
my babies - 'Shishar -Ghaants'-are craving
for the warm kiss of your teeth.
The winter has set - in, again,
Oh! Pandit reminding you here,
A Decade of our separation -
and how long have I to bear?

58 Adoration of a Divine Mother

Kiran Dhar, Calcutta

Dusk is falling
Lamps are lit.
The autumn air is cool and still.
The bells are calling from afar
Come join in Mother's adoration hour.
I enter slowly, but heartbeats race
Will I see her face to face.
My body trembles,
How shall I greet,
May I touch Her holy feet.
The air is filled with incense smoke
The priest prostrates in reverent pose.
The Mother in regal splendour stands
Enrobed in silks of red and gold.
Her golden crown and jewels shine
And dazzle every human eye.
Hibiscus, roses, marigold
In garlands fragrant her form enfold.
Compassion fills her lustrous eyes
her coral lips are half-smile.
One hand is raised to grant us boons
The other dispels our deepest fears.
Her beauty is beyond compare
With radiance of a thousand moons.
A shimmering mist is all around
My eyes adazzle, I fall aground
In adoration profound.
Beyond the bounds of time and space
Flows the Mother's endless grace.
The drums are beating rhythmic time,
The cymbals sound a resonant chime.
The bells are ringing loud and clear
Conchshells sounding everywhere,
Scent of incense fills the air,
Devotees voices raised in prayer
The Mother's here, the Mother's here.
Glory to the Mother evermore.
Besides the Mother's shining form
A lovely maiden stands alone.
Gently turning with her hands
A silken fan of rainbow hues.
The priest begins the evening prayer
With sonorous chanting deep and clear.
Then he takes the incense urn
And all around the Mother turns.
O Holy incense, fragrant smoke

Your perfume does the Mother cloak.
Next he takes the golden lamp
Ablaze with myriad dancing flames.
Waves in circles around Her form,
Around, around, and all around
Joy in every heart abounds.
O Holy lamp of brilliant light
Blest you to be in Mother's sight.
Now it is the lotus red
May you ever at her feet repose.
The worship's over, silence falls.
My heart is filled with love sublime
In the mirror of my heart
I only see the Mother's face.
O Mother Divine, from my heart I pray
Grant to me Thy wondrous Grace.
My only refuge is Thy lotus feet.
Nothing else I choose to seek.
In the quiet of my mind
Sounds the music of Thy voice.
My will surrendered to Thee rests
Do with me as Thou thinks best.

59 Kashmiri Pandit Reformation and the Global Diaspora

What are the challenges facing Kashmiri Hindus at present ?

Dr. Girdhari Lal Bhan, Dobcross, U.K.

In my living room, the pride and joy is a photograph that is 95 years old. Taken at the yajnopavit ceremony of my father and his brother, it shows how differently our elders dressed at that time. Doubtless, their customs and rituals were somewhat different to those in practice now. Even our language has been steadily transformed through the years. Thus it seems that a culture never remains the same. Like other things, it evolves over the passage of time. Instead of evolving thus, unfortunately, these days our culture is facing a threat to its very survival. This threat emanates from several sources:

Having been forced to leave our homeland, we are now exposed to the cultures and languages that are different to our own.

1) Technological revolution has tremendously increased the pace of change of almost everything in the world. Media-print, wireless, television, cinema, and the internet, are now the main teaching source for the minds of our growing children. In this scenario, our succeeding generations will be less and less aware of, and rooted in, their culture.

2) At present there is a desire to modernise, which for most people means to westernise. This is tragic. [It is also ironic-while we are busy lapping up the Western culture, people in the West are increasingly appreciative of the goodness of the Hindu values, and they express their regret that these are being abandoned.]

3) For people living outside Kashmir, especially those living abroad, preservation of culture is even more difficult - their children are under tremendous pressure to adopt the culture of the host community.

In order to protect our culture, we should address its components, including religious belief, customs, rituals, language, etc.

59.1 Religion and Rituals

- It is time to rediscover the wealth of knowledge our ancestors bequeathed us. We must all become learned in our shastras, and perform the sacred rituals with devotion.
- Our children ask questions. They are likely to reject customs and rituals unless given proper and satisfactory answers. Hence we must know the theory and reasoning behind the ritual and their possible relevance to the present and to the future.
- There has been a steady decline in the institution of the goar (Guruji or Purohit). This is very unfortunate and damaging to our community in the long run. This learned person can, and should, use the religious functions to explain to us, especially our children, the significance of the rituals. We must relearn to respect this person. Each community should arrange to pay a regular monthly salary to its 'goar' if this institution is to survive.

59.2 Customs

- We should know what these symbolise and what they stand for. Having done so, their sanctity should be restored.
- At the same time, bad social practices must be given up.
- We must be self-critical-criticism is healthy and leads to improvement. However, unfair criticism of our customs, based on ignorance, gives wrong signals to our children.
- The resources that are currently wasted at weddings and feasts and in providing dowry, should be diverted to provide for charity welfare of orphans, widows, and the destitute, and to support the education of our youth. The best investment in the rebuilding of our community and for the

restoration of our culture is the investment in the proper education of our youth. This education should include instruction in Hindu dharma, its ethics and values, and on how to be a good citizen.

59.3 *Language*

- Language is the strongest component of a culture. Everyone is agreed that Kashmiri language must be perpetuated, and that we should teach our children their mother tongue.
- Unfortunately, our language has been corrupted over the years through the heavy introduction of words from Persian, Arabic and English. We should commission our academics to restore the original Kashmiri words where appropriate.
- Secondly, language also evolves with time. Our language needs many new words if it is to keep up with the developments in various fields. These need to be coined by our academics.
- We need to adopt again the Shaardhaa script, which was abandoned long time ago for historical and political reasons.

59.4 *The Family*

- The traditional joint family system has served us well so far, and there is no system that can replace it.
- It may need some modifications to meet the challenges thrown at it by industrialisation.
- We must never forget that the emphasis on the individual rather than the family is against Hindu dharma. Besides, the family structure provides a built-in social security for various members, especially the elderly.

59.5 *The Community*

- It is vitally necessary to continue to interact, if we are to preserve our culture. We must maintain close contact with one another.
- The communities everywhere should celebrate important festivals like Nav-ryeh, and holy days like Shivratri and Janam Ashtmi.
- Conducting a Hawan / Yajna at least once a year would also help to bring members of the community closer to each other.
- Particularly in countries outside Bharat, it is necessary to develop special residential areas for the retired and the elderly.

59.6 *Time to Act*

Many challenges face us. Most important among these are the crusade for our lost homeland and the protection of our culture. For the latter, it is not enough to be proud of, and remain nostalgic for, the glorious past. The erosion of our culture has to be halted and we have to work to restore the values that have been lost. As the result of the hardships faced by us in the last millennium, we are able to survive under circumstances lethal to others. This physical survival is necessary, but the survival of the culture, in my opinion, is crucial. Kashmiri Hindus have long been regarded as an intelligent community and there is no dearth of intellectual resource within us. Couple it with vision, a sense of urgency, Organisation and discipline, and we can achieve greater results in a short time. Communicating with each other in Kashmiri language, written in the Shaardha script could be a start ! The challenges facing us in Britain are the same as those facing Kashmiri Hindus in Bengal, Jammu, or anywhere else, and these have to be met. We must not let our future generations down. If we did, we would have committed the sin of not paying our debt to our ancestors (pitr-rin).

I welcome, dear Reader, any comments you may have.

Girdhari Lal Bhan.

Camden, Dobcross, OL35NP
U.K.

60 Kashmiri Pandits in Cyber Space - Get Connected

Lalit Wanchoo, Sunil Fotedar, and Subodh Atal* - USA

**Lalit Wanchoo, President - Kashmiri Overseas Association (KOA)*

Sunil Fotedar, KOA Internet Activity Coordinator

Subodh Atal, Kashmir Information Network (KIN) Coordinator

The purpose of this article is to let our community know about the information super-highway activity by the Kashmiri Pandit Community in the United States. As we recognize that information is the strength of any argument, using it properly can be very effective in achieving one's goal. We also understand that with our limited resources, we have to use a mechanism that is cost-effective and makes use of available tools for the dissemination of information worldwide. The Internet and the World Wide Web provide one such avenue that can put people together in a matter of minutes over cyberspace to share their views and opinions.

We chose this activity because in last five years Internet has become so popular and important that one has a hard time visualizing life without it. It is offering a single global platform as a complete community environment in the Cyberspace. This may threaten those who are not connected, i.e., those not living in this Cyberspace. Also, as our children grow up with this electronic media for the communication, use of the Internet will become an integral and important part of everyone's life. One would question : What is this Cyberspace ? The cyberspace term was originated in 1984 by author William Gibson in his science fiction novel "Neuromancer". In an interview, Gibson referred it to as a metaphor that allows us to grasp this place where since about the time of the Second World War we have increasingly done so many things that we think of as civilization. Cyberspace is currently used to describe the whole range of information resources available through computer networks which include E-mail, Internet to various people. The Internet is the vast collection of inter-connected networks that use a standard protocol in transferring information. While as the World Wide Web (WWW), commonly referred to as Web, is the collection of information in various forms, such as text, graphics, audio, video, movies, and combination of these forms using various standard formats. The Internet is used to access the web servers.

Many companies are using the Internet for marketing their products and services 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Growth in the Cyberspace has been phenomenal. It has been reported that in 1996 there were 40 million people connected to Internet through 60,000 independent networks hosting over 29 million websites. It is expected that by the end of the century there will be over 300 million people worldwide accessing about 100 million websites. This reflects on the amount of information that is going to flow through the Internet, which is measured, in terms of bits-per-second. For reference, a full page of text is about 16,000 bits and with the current available technology it will take under a second for its transfer from one computer to another.

Keeping this thing in mind, a few dedicated young KPs in the USA volunteered to pursue Internet activity. In 1995, with the help of a few members, Internet activity was launched and now four years later many KPs worldwide are helping in this activity. The sociocultural aspect of Kashmiri Pandits are being addressed by the Kashmiri Overseas Association (KOA), while as the political information is being tackled by the Kashmir Information Network (KIN), part of the Indo-American Kashmir Forum (IAKF).

The Kashmiri Overseas Association (KOA) of USA, a non-profit, cultural organization of the Kashmiri Pandits (KP) settled in the USA, has been actively involved in the Internet and World Wide Web for creating repository and the dissemination of information related to Kashmiri Pandit culture, history, religion, and tourism. This web site also carries paintings by KP artists, Kashmiri songs and Bhajans, several video documentaries, Chat, announcements, appeals, tributes, and information about KOA gatherings in USA. KOA also offers free on-line matrimonial services since August 1998. So far over 150 matrimonials were carried on this web site and according to our estimates, about 10

percent have established relationships. Our expectation is that this will be the resource used by our community worldwide.

In addition, KOA offers a private e-mail based information exchange for Kashmiri Pandits, KPnet, as an open forum to share news and views on social, religious, cultural and political issues with other KP subscribers. Each subscriber is encouraged to provide personal views / comments about any relevant KP issue, comment on the public actions of our community leaders, and participate in discussion of any issue that touches our community. The purpose of the KPnet is to provide a healthy and encouraging environment for timely exchange of information, views, and opinions. This is a free email service to any KP worldwide but one has to register with the KOA's KPnet Administrator for this service. People have used this service to seek information, locate friends, express opinions, share news and exchange greetings. This service is also offered through the Web under KP mail.

We plan to link all KP organizations together using the Internet to minimize the physical distances. We offer our free services to any KP organization to get on the Web and be connected through Internet. Our appeal to all the organizations is to get an e-mail account and get connected through KPnet for news and views. We want to create our own KPcyberspace where we may share information, provide support system and walk together holding hands.

On the political front, Pro-Pakistani and fundamentalist Kashmiri Muslims seeking separation from India have used the Internet and the Web for misinformation and disinformation on the Kashmir issue. In order to counter this campaign launched against the minuscule KP community, a team of dedicated KP individuals, grouped under Kashmir Information Network (KIN) in the USA, has created another Web site. The KIN Web site carries information about the on-going struggle of the KPs as refugees in their own country, the conditions that prevailed in the valley before their exodus, their history of survival through centuries of persecution at the hands of cruel Muslim rulers in the valley, the detailed case analyses of various Kp individuals killed by the Pakistan-sponsored militants, and several massacres of the KPs that have taken place after their exodus. This Web site is also a repository describing the ethnic cleansing of KPs from the valley of Kashmir. KIN is recognized internationally as the top Web site representing Kashmiri Hindu political viewpoints, and is ranked at or near the top among all Kashmir-related Web sites by several Web "search engines". A portion of KIN, Kashmir Terrorism Index, has been referenced among the top counter-terrorism sites in the world.

The KIN Website includes the following key sections:

- 1) Kashmir Terrorism Bulletin - lists latest day-today details about Pakistan-supported terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir,
- 2) Kashmir Terrorism Index - a comprehensive and unique Web portal detailing terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir and Pakistan's deadly role.
- 3) Between Kashmir And Islamic Fanaticism - The Real Heroes - profiles of brave Indian soldiers who put their lives on the line to prevent the fall of Kashmir to Islamic Fanaticism.
- 4) The Continuing Civilian Toll of Terrorism in Kashmir - tracks number of non-combatant civilian deaths due to terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir, including cumulative monthly totals, and
- 5) On-line Videos - provides an audio-visual account of the human tragedy facing Kashmiri Pandits ethnically cleansed from their ancestral homeland.
- 6) Ethnic Cleansing Glimpses - provides detailed glimpses into ethnic cleansing of nearly 300,000 Kashmiri Pandits from their ancestral homeland.

In addition, the KIN has launched a monthly electronic newsletter, Kashmir Chronicle, that carries current news and reviews of terror and tragedy in Jammu and Kashmir. The Kashmir Chronicle is e-mailed to over 750 e-mail addresses of US Congressmen, US Senators, Policymakers, Thinktanks, US and Indian newspapers, and Canadian Parliamentarians, and well wishers, We plan to add

European and Indian elected officials and other newspapers. The past issues of this E-newsletter are available from KIN's website.

For information or questions regarding KOA, please send an e-mail to

wanchoo@koausa.org and for information or questions regarding KIN, please send an e-mail to: kin@kashmir-information.com

The website addresses of interest are

1 - Kashmiri Overseas Association of USA (KOAUSA):

<http://www.koausa.org>

2. KPmail - KPnet mail on the Web (need to register for a password)

<http://www.koausa.org/KPmail>

3. To subscribe to KPnet mail, send an e-mail to: koausa@koausa.org

4. KPmatrimonial - Web based matrimonial service

<http://www.koausa.org/Matrimonial>

5. Kashmir Information Network (KIN): <http://www.kashmir-information.com>

6. Kashmir Chronicle - Monthly E-newsletter

<http://www.kashmir-information.com/KashmirChronicle>

7. Kashmir Terrorism Index

<http://www.kashmir-information-com/Terrorism>

8. To subscribe to Kashmir Chronicle, send an e-mail to:

kin@kashmir-information.com

61 Kashmiri Pandit Diaspora & The KOA

Brij Krishen Saraf, San Jose, California

[An address delivered the KOA members at Fremont, California]

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today we are all gathered here to discuss an age-old dilemma.

How do we hold on to our past while marching to the drums of the future ?

How do we make our young aware of our rich cultural heritage and their roots while living in an alien world ?

How do we foster a sense of pride in our past and belonging, in our community while living in a materialistic and ever changing culture where the old is tossed aside and supplanted by equally transient substitutes ?

History bears out that the Kashmiri Pandit community has been repeatedly forced into exodus from our native land and dispersed throughout India. From the remnants of that community in the valley we grew back into a small well-knit community. The present Diaspora is very disturbing and ominous. We have now been effectively uprooted, deprived of our personal space and oxygen that sustained our culture heritage and customs, Now we find ourselves spread thin throughout the world and in imminent danger of finding our cultural moorings snapped and drifting rudderless.

Dark clouds hang over our community putting a question mark over its survival in an unfeeling world. However, there is a silver lining around this cloud, which we hope will ensure that our community lives and grows. This lining is that of our culture and heritage, which we received as a rich legacy from our forefathers. The height of their spiritual and intellectual thought, depth of their scholarship and wisdom and the breadth of their vision are all well embedded in the cultural treasure bequeathed to us.

Let us look at the Jews who suffered persecution over centuries culminating in Holocaust and a colossal exodus. What kept the community from going extinct were their very strong cultural bond and their fierce, almost fanatical adherence to the modes and mores, religious and social traditions, and practices. Whether Jews live in faraway Kerala in India or in any European or American cities, they all observe the same rituals and practices. They did not lose their faith in their cultural strength and it stood them in good stead and kept them bound together through their survival struggle into a successful emergence as a power to reckon with.

Are Kashmiri Pandits any different ? No ! We too have faced and are facing . persecution and deprivation. What should hold us together is our strong, unbreakable chain of our culture. While voices are being raised in different fora for our political and physical rehabilitation which will be a long and protracted struggle, KOA has today rightly raised a wake-up call to launch a campaign urging promotion, preservation and propagation of our culture and heritage. Today we are here to present some ideas to see how best we can achieve these objectives. I have a few thoughts and ideas to share with you.

1) Observe and celebrate our religious festivals together and with due reverence. These should not be social occasions merely for Khana Peena, chit-chat, breast-beating, griping, and exchanging hard-luck stories about our fate. In these functions we should have brief and interesting talks about our culture and heritage. These talks should be designed to disseminate the wisdom of our illustrious ancestors like Lal Ded, Roopa Bhavani, Amimal, Master Zind Kaul, Paramanand, Swami Laxman joo to name only a few from our galaxy of thinkers and philosophers. However, since we are targeting the younger generation who are impatient and want concrete guidance and advice, these talks should be presented in a language and style which is similar to what they are used to in their daily interaction. This is very important in order to engender and sustain their interest in connecting them seamlessly to their cultural roots.

2) We should start a regular magazine maybe monthly / bimonthly written in a modern language and style. Knowledgeable members of the community should write the articles about our ethos and edited and formatted by younger members of the community who are aware of the style which will engage the eye, mind and spirit of the young readers. We have a treasure trove of writings of eminent thinkers of the past from which we can draw substance for these presentations. The presentations have to avoid the rather ponderous and verbose style that will turn off the young readers.

3) Books on our culture and heritage available back home, should be imported by KOA and sold to the community members. It would be excellent if some sort of libraries were setup where these books including our great Indian epics like Ramayana, Mahabharata and Gita would be shared among the members. Study of such books and articles will go a long way in developing cultural awareness among our members and our growing children. For small children, we should get picture books on religious stories of epics. Parents have to be urged by KOA to find time to be close to their kids telling them bedtime stories from these picture books. You may scoff at this idea but picture books have a very healthy and direct impact on the child as pictures immediately engage the eye, mind and the spirit. The lessons drawn from these stories will register on the child and help in developing healthy attitudes like belief in god, discipline, respect towards elders, and a sense of community. This is a small price to pay for priceless peace of mind and satisfaction of seeing kids grow well-rooted and well-groomed into responsible young men and women to carry on our identity.

4) KOA should give serious consideration to having a stronger representation of women in their ranks and decision making. Women by nature are more community oriented and involved in the welfare and development of their family. I believe there should be a 50% representation of women in the office bearers of the organization and as a matter of fact women should be encouraged to get the top post in the organization. Women traditionally have the ability to put their egos aside for the common good of the community instead of trying to butt heads in buttressing fragile egos. This principle is being followed even in the top US and even Indian corporations. Research is beginning to show that women may be better managers than men.

5) KOA should set up a world wide Congress of Kashmiri Pandits where intellectuals of the community present talks and hold seminars on topics which are of relevance to the Kashmiri community. These talks can be on wide ranging subjects that could stretch from Shaivism to discussing the unfortunate upsurge of divorce in the community. We can provide some sort of mechanism whereby counseling could be made available to troubled families and couples in an attempt to resolve estrangements.

6) Language is the cement that binds a people together. We notice that Kashmiris unlike other Indian communities shy away from use of their own language. The result is that they and their children have become only English speaking. This has resulted in their getting alienated from their own people. When they go back to India for vacations they cannot communicate with their cousins and most importantly the elders of the community. They feel left out, bored and basically they tune out and eventually lose interest in anything connected to the old country. I have seen Gujrati people who have immigrated to Kenya, Uganda or even the USA several generations back but their present day children besides speaking English and the local language speak and read their mother tongue fluently. If they can do it, so can we. KOA comes into the picture by emphasizing this need in the KP families by constantly urging the members to speak at home in their mother tongue Kashmiri and during our social meetings. However, several young families do not speak Kashmiri fluently. In these cases Hindi is the next best substitute. KOA should emphasize the three language formula. Our children should be taught to speak the mother tongue Kashmiri, the national language, Hindi, and the world language of English. We just need to sustain a living and vibrant language, an easy task and I know we can do it. This will throw open the window to our past and our wonderful heritage to the children so that they will get a clear understanding of their cultural background and roots. This will help develop their personality, outlook and enable them to acquire, maintain and proudly wear the badge of their unique identity while living next to people of other cultures.

7) This point is more specific to the West Coast. We find an increasing number of Kashmiris is coming to live and work in California. The West Coast KOA has done a very commendable job of creating a community environment. However, West Coast KOA needs to increase the number of community activities including camping, picnicking, hiking trips, etc. which involve children.

8) Next I would like to raise the most important of all questions, namely marriage. Scattered as we are, parents are facing a vexing problem of finding appropriate matches for their sons and daughters. Since, we have left the city of seven bridges and spread out to seven continents the search for life partners has become very difficult. KOA can facilitate this process by setting up a database of eligible boys and girls with detailed information about them and a mechanism whereby the parents and the boy and girl can easily meet and interact. There is no shame in putting the word out in the media when the time for marriage of our children looms. We should consider this as a perfectly honorable and dignified method of search in the absence of "Manzumyors" of the old country. This will help in consolidating our community and keeping our limited genetic pool intact as far as possible.

Finally, I must sum up and say that although the work on preservation, promotion and propagation of our unique culture appears daunting but with all of us standing firmly behind KOA we can shoulder this bag of responsibility. This task is doable, objectives achievable and dreams about bright future realizable. This package of our cultural values from our forefathers has to be received, respected, nourished and then passed on to the next generation. This way we will not only survive but thrive too. What better way of expressing it than quoting a line from Kahlil Gibran who said, "We will give it unto our children, they, unto their children and it shall not perish".

Thank you all. God bless our community. God bless India. God Bless USA where we have opportunities to live and work with dignity. Thank you.

62 Civil Disobedience in Thoreau and Gandhi

Ashu Daftari*, Davis, USA

*[*Ashu received an award on this essay when he was in Grade XI.]*

Henry David Thoreau's classic essay, "Resistance to Civil Government" developed ideas that eventually became influential to thinkers and reformers of the twentieth century. Thoreau's tract not only serves as a social commentary on the governments' support of slavery and its participation in the Mexican War, but also as a treatise on the individuals' relationship to government. Much of Thoreau's ideas are similar to the moral and political writings of Mohandas K. Gandhi. Both writers advocated the superiority of the individual conscience and stressed the need for individuality. Both writers not only commented on the duty of the individual to lead a life of principle, but also argued for the right to resist an unjust authority. However, it was Gandhi who adopted Thoreau's ideas into a system that stressed political rebellion through individual self-suffering and by non-violent means.

Throughout much of Thoreau's essay, the idea of individual conscience accumulates into the centrepiece and foundation from which most of his ideas are built upon. Thoreau often displays a distrust in the actions of a government based on majority rule. Thoreau maintained that the majority have access to the most power "not because they are more likely to be in the right... but because they are physically the strongest". He further explains that government "in which the majority rule in all cases cannot be based on justice..... Essentially, the author's inability to trust the actions of the majority rule further leads him to believe in conscientious superiority. In the beginning of his treatise, he asks : "Can there not be a government in which majorities do not virtually decide right or wrong, but conscience?". Thoreau, without leaving the question unanswered later remarks that 'we should be men first, and subjects afterwards. It is not desirable to cultivate a respect for the law, so much as for the right. The only obligation which I have a right to assume, is to do at any time what I think right". From this point of view, Thoreau maintains that the individual conscience inherits a morally superior characteristic than the government of the majority. Thus, Thoreau establishes his entire political philosophy on the idea that the conscience is ultimately the most trustworthy criterion of what is politically accurate.

The ultimate consequence of Thoreau's belief of the superiority of the individual conscience is its assertion for radical individualism. Thoreau maintains that the individual relying on his self-conscience, rather than the majority, will attain a better understanding of moral truths. Thus, "any man more right than his neighbours, constitute a majority of one already." Thoreau also proclaims that the individual living by conscience will not only understand moral truths, but will also attain the ability to lead a "life by principle." For Thoreau, this form of existence is the most ideal state of living. Furthermore, it becomes an important step in rebellion against the State. He states that action from principle creates a strong impact in political rebellion because it "not only divides states and churches, it divides families; aye, it divides the individual, separating the diabolical in him from the divine." In this passage, Thoreau implies that an individual must be free thinking in order to develop his own ideas and understand clearly the unjust practices of the State. Action from principle, as Thoreau maintains allows the individual to understand that to 'commit actions, supposedly against the State, based on fundamental principles would have a stronger impact on the values of society than any other form of resistance. He maintains that action from principle would force society, as well as the individual, to re-examine its values and compare them to the moral truths. Thus, action from principle becomes a powerful force in the process of civil disobedience.

In the various writings of Mohandas K. Gandhi, the idea of the importance of the individual conscience and its influence on a life stemming from principle is often similar to the viewpoint of Thoreau. Gandhi, also had a distrust for the majority rule and believed in moral growth through the dependency of the individual conscience. Like Thoreau, he also felt that this form of growth would lead to individualistic tendencies that would be morally beneficial for the individual and for society. His distrust for the majority stemmed from the belief that the majority rules without conscience and

without regard for the minorities. By doing this, he believed that numerical strength savors of violence when it acts in total disregard of any strongly felt opinion of a minority" (quoted in Iyer, 142). Thus, Gandhils vision of the State of majority rule is one that not only remains unsympathetic to the minority, but builds a foundation built on violence. Because of Gandhi's belief in the non-violent State as the ideal, he ultimately rejects the notion of the majority rule.

Like Thoreau, Gandhi also believed that conscience living would eventually lead to a life of action from of principle he also stressed the importance of individualism in order for the process of spiritual and moral growth to occur. However, Gandhi distrusted the more radical form of individualism that separated the person completely from society. In 1939, he stated "Unrestricted individualism is the law of the beast of the jungle. We have learnt to strike the mean between individual freedom and social restraint. Willing submission to social restraint for the sake of well-being for the whole society, enriches both the individual and the society of which he is a member" (quoted in Iyer, 115). For Gandhi, individualism meant the ability to place the conscience in a higher priority than the State and still remain an active member of society. By combining "individual freedom" and "social restraint" the individual would attain the ability to influence the ethics of society within the confines of law and order. Gandhi's vision of individualism slightly differed from Thoreau who argued, in *Walden*, that "If a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer. Let him step to the music which he hears, however measured or far away.' Thus, Tboreau's idea of individualism sought an existence that could potentially disregard society completely, while Gandhi sought ' an individualism that simultaneously remained a morally responsible member of society.

From his essay, Thoreau implies that action from principle germinates into the beginning seeds of civil disobedience and later expands his argument in order to show its deeper significance in society. He attempts to display how ideology should eventually transform into practical application. As stated earlier, Thoreau believed in the superiority of the individual conscience over the rule of the majority. He further states that if the individual's morally conscience beliefs conflict with the beliefs and practices of the State, then that person must consider it a duty to disengage from the injustices committed by society. He states the individual bears no responsibility in eradicating all the injustices of the State, but must "wash his hands of it, and, if he gives it no thought longer, not to give it practically his support." He further states that not only must the individual refuse his allegiance to the State, but must also "withdraw their support, both in person and property." For Thoreau, the individual existing by conscience would attain the inability to conform to a inhumane society. By the very act of living from principle, it would not allow a person to harmonise a conscientious life while being a member of an unjust State. Thus, the individual must live according to his nature even if it means a complete removal of oneself from the State. This idea becomes the central point in resisting the civil government. In one particular passage, Thoreau states: "I know this well, that if one thousand, if one hundred ... if ten honest men only-aye, if one honest man, in the State of Massachusetts, ceasing to hold slaves, were actually to withdraw from this copartnership, and be locked up in the county jail therefore, it should be the abolition of slavery in America." Through this proclamation, Thoreau implies that the mass of individuals who practiced the right to disengage from society would not only resist the immorality of the State, but would coerce the reevaluating its ethical procedures and forcing them to reform.

In this matter of refusing allegiance to the State, Gandhi hardly differs from Thoreau's convictions. In his philosophical worldview, Gandhi also embodied a distrust for the State. He viewed the State as a inhumane infrastructure of individuals that 11 represent violence in a concentrated and organised form. The individual has a soul, but as the State is a soulless machine, it can never be weaned from violence to which it owes its very existence" (quoted in Iyer, 254). Gandhi, like Thoreau, implies that a State that exists as a "soulless machine" does not have the ability to exists as a moral and just institution. In this case, he, like Thoreau, believes it to be the duty of the morally conscience individual to resist the corrupted authority. In fact, he states that "an evil administration never

deserves such allegiance. Allegiance to it means partaking of the evil. A good man will therefore, resist an evil system of administration ... Disobedience of the laws of an evil state is, therefore, a duty" (quoted in Iyer, 257). In this system of thought, both men imply this form of resistance as the obligation of the conscience minded individual.

In general, both writers would agree that the moral violent manner and absorbed physical and spiritual individual disengaging from an unjust State would be an ideal form of civil disobedience. Thoreau believed that this form of action would eventually influence the conscience of other individuals and ultimately lead them to disengage from society (Iyer, 268). Gandhi, however, did not completely embrace Thoreau's convictions and also felt such actions to be a limited form of resistance. In 1931 he discussed Thoreau in an written essay and stated : "...Thoreau was not perhaps an out and out champion of nonviolence. Probably, also, Thoreau limited his of statutory laws to the revenue laws, i.e., payment of taxes. Whereas the term Civil Disobedience as practised in 1919 covered a breach of any statutory and unmoral law. It signified the resister's outlawry in a civil i.e., non-violent manner" (quoted in Iyer, 275). Essentially, Gandhi felt that he was extending Thoreau's ideas on civil disobedience. He felt that the individual conscience ultimately influencing the conscience of mass individuals could lead to a violent rebellion against the State. He also felt that this type of action was an appeal to reason. Gandhi felt that reasoning to an individual conscience was sometimes ineffective because an "appeal to reason does not answer where prejudices are age-long. " " (quoted in Iyer, 289). Thus, in order to embrace Thoreau's ideas of disengaging from society without causing a violent resistance, Gandhi developed a system of civil disobedience, which he called Satyagraha. In this system of resistance, Gandhi believed that the resister could reform individuals in an unjust State by undertaking a process of self-suffering. In 1932 he stated : "Suffering is the law of human beings ... the penetration of the heart comes from suffering. It opens the inner understanding of man" (quoted in Iyer, 287). Gandhi felt that self-suffering would lead to a non-violent form of disobedience that would change the attitude of society by appealing to their emotions rather than reason. In this system, Gandhi stressed a form of civil disobedience that would not violate the unmoral laws of that particular institution. He believed that the individual that acted in a non-suffering without violence would be practicing the ideal form of civil disobedience. Through the suffering of the resister, Gandhi argued, the individuals of society would realise the injustices of the State's laws, thereby causing reform in an unanarchistic manner (Iyer, 276).

Comparatively, the philosophy of Thoreau and Gandhi to the relationship between the individual and the the to the relationship between the individual and the State. Both advocated individualistic free-thinking and the importance of individual conscience over the belief of a majority ruled State. Both, also believed that conscience individuals could only prosper in a State that contained minimum intervention. Gandhi's vision of an ideal State was one where 'everyone is his own ruler ... In the ideal State, therefore, there is no political power because there is no State. But the ideal is never fully realised in life" (quoted in Iyer, 254). Thus, his belief in a limited government very much coincides with Thoreau's idea that "government is best which governs not at all." However, the difference between the two writers falls mostly on emphasis. In Thore . au's case, he not only held the individual conscience as the highest test of truth, but also felt it "would culminate in conduct that would arouse and ppeal to the conscience of others" (Iyer, 268). This form of arousal could lead to a state of anarchy and a violent form of resistance to a unjust authority, an idea that Thoreau does not deny in his essay. Gandhi, however, felt that an individual following his own conscience could not be 'dependent on social recognition" (Iyer, 268). He envisioned a form of resistance that would not lead to violence and anarchy. While Thoreau discussed the end and the means, Gandhi placed heavy emphasis on the means. While Thoreau discussed the rights of the individual to rebel against authority, Gandhi expressed the duty of individuals to reform an unjust authority while maintaining law and order. Thus, through his political system, Gandhi was able to use Thoreau's ideas in a non-violent manner.

63 *My Kashmir*

Kanchan Autar Mattoo, USA

She sits and waits for us,
along the whitest of white peaks.
She does not understand
why they destroy her land, her children,
her life.
She wishes to be at peace
with the ones she bore
from the depths of her womb.
No God holds true happiness, she cries.
Allow yourselves to be one with me.
For, I am she who you fight over.
For, I am she who hundreds have died
over.
For, I am she who has been abandoned.
For, I am Kashmir,
and I want my children back.

64 Mother

Kanchan Autar Mattoo, USA

Amidst her labour pangs, I sprang out from her
womb
She was the one who watched me emerge from
the childhood
into the person I am now.
She always has been there for me, never once
thinking about
herself when her own were in pain.
Her care brought out the happiness in each of us,
Like river Ganga, who has fed her
country with life giving care,
She is one of kind.- she is my Mother.
Now away I stand alone. No longer did my
supports
stand close.
Fear continually ran through my cells and yet
picking up
a phone and calling she, who held me in her arms
for so many days and nights,
all was made well and I think of how she has
always
been there for me,
standing aloof, but still present.
Her love for me seems so large that I only wish I
could somehow offer,
only a percentage back.
My Love is abundant and with my care I hope she
knows that I am
hers forever.
With every breath I only wish, happier, Longer
life for her;
For she is my Mother and she is my Goddess.
In your eyes do I actually see.
In your heart do I actually beat.
In your ears do I actually hear.
In your smile do I live.

65 An Unexpected End

Sameer Munshi, USA

I am really excited,
because I am flying on a plane.
I love going on vacations,
with no work or much pain.
The flight takes seven hours,
and I will enjoy every single one.
Because while I am on this vacation,
I will only have fun.
Roses were sent to me,
and I also received candy.
All this for my hard work,
Isn't life dandy?
The plane seemed so happy,
with little kids running around.
many people seemed so blissful,
and I enjoyed the sound.
With two hours left on the flight,
I saw a few men walk to the washrooms.
A few more men stood up,
and suddenly I heard a boom!
"Get Down" I heard people scream,
as little babies started to cry.
I felt very angry and frustrated,
and thought if I was going to die.
The men were very scary,
and said we all were not allowed to walk.
They were terrorists from an enemy
country,
and wouldn't even let us talk.
Our flight was now reversed,
to the terrorist's homeland.
They demanded that my country give
money,
or they would cut off all our hands.
I thought of the politics,
that created this mess.
Although I didn't do anything wrong,
the length of my life will be less.
I pray that my country gives in,
to the terrorist's demands.
because two little children were killed,
from them cutting off their hands.
The plane was turned into a blood marsh,
with probably seventeen people dead.
For what my country decided,

they will soon cut off my head.
This war between the countries,
has lasted several years.
But never did I consider the innocent,
and that brought me many tears.
As I wait in this airplane,
as my death will soon take place.
I think of the people that did this to me,
making me meet my death face to face.
For the people that started this war,
your neck I would like to bend.
That is because many just experienced,
An Unexpected End.

66 An Overlooked Act

Sameer Munshi, USA

For the time that just passed,
we have barely managed to survive.
The resources are just not available,
and our financial support has just taken a dive.
We live in homes of straw,
in the sweltering heat that could kill us all.
Water that comes from the river,
is warm from spring to fall.
During the season of rain,
it is almost like God's gift.
Although it lasts for several weeks,
to our spirits it gives such a lift.
That is because when it doesn't rain,
there is usually a drought with such heat.
On some days when it is clear and dry,
we use a magnifying lens to cook meat!
The lens was given to us from the government,
who try their hardest to give the least.
Most of the aid money is corrupted,
as we starve, the politicians feast.
A few days ago my country tested,
bombs of absolute power.
They showed the world their strength and might,
but suddenly we hadn't the money to even shower.
Several countries imposed sanctions,
hurting the people that you never see.
These people are my people,
they're my friends, family and me.
I have neither food nor potable water,
as the politicians of this country just boast.
No one is taking a closer look,
where the population and damage is the most.
My children are five and seven,
and they too yearn for something to eat.
They run around trying to have fun,
wearing nothing at all on their feet.
While others in this country,
live as well as a king.
have homes decorated beautifully,
and in their yards they may have a spring.
My husband has become very ill,
and has been in bed for a few weeks.
I think it might be either the heat or stress,
but it has made him very meek.
Others and I are suffering a lot from this action,

and that is a known fact.
All because this nation suffered from,
An Overlooked Act.

67 *The Color of Skin*

Sameer Munshi, USA

It was exhausting and boring,
and frustrating too.
But the chance that I would get a job,
is making me turn blue.
I have been trying for a long time,
to get a real job and live well.
But the answer was always, "no"
and the reasons were not swell.
I had the best grades in high school,
4.0 GPA.
Scored very high on the SAT's
but I still don't get good pay.
In the place where I lived,
I was the only one of my kind.
It was very hard to grow up,
but I still nourished my mind.
People made fun of me
but to them no attention I paid.
I studied around the clock,
and not one friend I made.
I didn't care to have any fun,
because I knew that competition was tough.
Especially for me, being different and all,
my school years were very rough.
I struggled to do my best,
and still my effort hasn't been seen.
I went to college and got my degrees,
and to get a job I am very keen.
I have been rejected several times,
for jobs of different rank.
On the phone my hopes are very high,
but then in person, it seemed like a prank.
The reason for I.get rejected,
is the color of my skin.
With my qualifications,
any job I could win.
I don't understand it,
why am I punished for doing my best?
I worked hard and never cheated,
and completed projects with much zest.
At this point it seems,
that my life could be a waste.
Without a job, there's no money
and then life's a haste.
So I will always try,

to get a job of high positions
I will be tenacious and persistent,
for this is my new mission.
So I found from my life,
aside from self discipline.
there is a major difference in judgment,
The Color of Skin.

68 Life is too Short for War

Sameer Munshi, USA

While the leaders of my country,
just sat there in vain.

Why am I to die,
when the politicians are at fault.
I never asked for a war,
but now my life is at a halt.

I have a few hours to live,
may be even less.

While I see blood around me,
I do not feel blessed.

The clock is ticking,
and I am running out of breath.
Because my leaders started this war,
I will soon meet my death.

69 Kashmir: The Roots of our Culture

Dr. K. N. Pandita*, Jammu

*(*The author is the former Director, Centre of Central Asian studies, Kashmir University)*

The Persian work *Dabistan-e Mazahib* authored by Mohsin Fani in the middle of 17th century, has not received the due attention it deserved from Kashmirian researchers. It refers to the presence of the people of Zoroastrian and Jewish faiths in Kashmir in olden days apart from the people of other faiths as well.

Many works of Arab historians speak of the movement of the Jews towards the Hindu Kush and beyond particularly of the people of the 'lost tribe'. According to many commentators, they settled in modern Afghanistan and Kashmir regions. Physical features of some groups of people in the area, especially their hooked nose tips, prompted many physiognomists to offer them as proofs of their Jewish origin.

[Apart from physiognomy, some of the characteristics of the people of this region are also attributed to their Jewish origin. For example in Kashmir, a general belief is that only two communities in the world go to bed without any clothes on their body : these are the Jews and the Kashmiris. Likewise the custom of usury has been common among the Afghans and Kashmiri moneylenders even after Afghanistan became Islamic.

These introductory remarks may or may not be historically correct, nevertheless the legend goes like that. And what we want to state here is that the high mountains that skirt the region have not always hampered Kashmir's connection with the world outside.

Ancient mythological works either in India or in Iran, the two countries with ancient and complementary civilization, have not totally ignored the geography of the region to which the early Aryans migrated from different parts of Central Asia. But of course the place names have undergone many changes and sometimes there is much difficulty in identifying them. In particular, with the passage of time, there were physical changes because of geographical cycle, and grasslands turned into deserts or the vice versa. The rivers changed their course, the lakes broke into rivers and new lakes were formed. To cite one example, the Oxus, which was thought to be emptying itself in the Aral Sea, changed its course and fell into Caspian Sea. Even that situation has also changed because now its waters dry up somewhere in the eastern regions of modern Turkmenistan.

Avestic mythological literature, the Gathas in particular, tell us that Zaradaushtara (Zardusht/Zoroaster, literally meaning 'yellow camel' because Zoroaster was imagined to be riding a camel), the prophet of the fire worshipping people was born in a very cold region [to the east of Iranvaej, The region called Iranvaej has been thoroughly discussed by Iranologists like Noldeke and Darmesteter. They have arrived at the conclusion that Iranvaej was the region now called Iran extending from the Pamirian Mountains in the east to the Caucasus (koh-e-kaff) in the west. The cold region of eastern Iranvaej, therefore, should be the Pamirian- Badakhshan mountain region and what the Gathas say confirms the rise of Zoroaster in this region.]

Incidentally it may be mentioned that the first ever state raised by the Aryans in cis-Oxus region was in the same mountainous region to which the Greek historian. Herodotus gave the name of Bactria. In olden Persian works, this place was known as Bakhtar and Bakhri in Vedic works. Some researchers are of opinion that modern Balkh could be considered the epicenter of the ancient Bactrian State.

Kohzad, the well-known Afghan scholar has discussed this issue very ably in his two-volume *Tarikh-e-Afghanistan*. According to him the first ever State of Bactria established by the Aryans was a typical and ideal State with defined number of citizens, male and female, and with a hard code of conduct in their social relationship. The norms of conducting social affairs were defined and also those of worship, which the citizens were enjoined upon to observe with strictness.

The moral and religious code, which we find so stubbornly adhered to by the Zoroastrians should trace its origin to this earliest Aryan state in the lap of the Pamirian-Badakhshanian mountains.

The Pamirs are too close to the regions of the Hindu Kush and the Karakorum to its east. Therefore expansion of Zoroastrian religion and its civilization to the east of the Pamirs is but natural and justifiable. It is difficult to find any names of missionaries who carried the message of Zoroaster to the people in the east because in those distant days common people were the messengers without being assigned the particular mission of propagating faith and converting others to their own.

The ancient Kashmiris are the descendants of Aryans whose ancestors settled down after the valley was de-watered and habitation began in the dried up lands. But essentially in the beginning the habitation took place in the elevated regions called *karewa* in Farsi and largely known to the revenue records of modern Kashmir. These Aryans are reported to have developed civilization and social order, and when they settled in Kashmir and perhaps the northern India, they carried with them their civilizational symbols and practices. They moulded their life after the pattern that existed earlier in the place of the origin of their first ancestors, the Aryans of Central Asia.

Now we know that fire is the greatest discovery made by man. The discovery of fire changed the life of man so drastically that he found himself the most powerful of the creatures. Fire had multifaceted utility for him, it could warm, cook, burn, lit and ward off the wild and ferocious beasts. Man felt not only powerful but also secure with this discovery in his hand.

The fire, therefore, enjoyed the highest place among the manifestations of nature with the Aryans. It was raised to the heights of sanctimonious manifestations of nature. With this consideration, fire began to be worshipped as the representation of nature's power. People giving the fire its due respect, came to be called the fire-worshippers or *aatash parastan* in the literature of ancient Iranians. It has to be remembered that fire worshipping was an ante-Zoroastrian practice but since Zoroaster gave it the high place in the hierarchy of nature's manifestations, the fire-worshipping came to be recognized as the religion of Zoroaster.

It is true that in Zoroastrian civilization, three types of fires were identified : the fire of the royalty (*Aazar Gushnasp*), the fire of the army (*Aazar Aapaadgan*) and the fire of common man (*Aazar Barzin*). The headquarters of the Fire of the Army (*Aazar Aapaadgan*) was located in the west of modern Iran near Lake *Aromiah*. From *Aazar Aapaadgan* we get the place name *Aazarpadgan* and modern Azerbaijan, the western province of ancient Iran which was divided into two parts after the Soviets established their sway over half of it in the second World War. Its Avestic name was *Atrapatene*.

The history of ancient Kashmir does not inform us that the ancient Kashmiris too had identified three types of fires. But the fact is that fire became inseparable part of the culture of ancient Kashmiris. Pandits being the custodians of unbroken cultural link, none of their social and religious functions is complete without the presence of fire (*agni*). The Sanskrit name for fire has its Greek equivalent in *Ignus* from which we get *ignition*, *ignite* etc. The word *aazar* in Pahlavi language of ancient Iran is the corruption of *aatar* of Avestic meaning fire. From *Aatar* we get the Arabic/Persian *atr* meaning essence or perfume. In English language we have *ether* or the essence. Conversion of *Agni* into *Aatar* of Avestic times is explainable. In Kashmiri we have retained the word *ogun* derived from *Agni*. In Kashmiri we have the word *eather* with two meanings, one is the wool worm and the other conveys the sense of destruction in broad terms.

Zoroastrian religion found a receptive ground in Central Asia or the lands beyond the Oxus. Though *shahnameh* of *Firdowsi* tells us extensively the political rivalry between the Iranians and the Turanians, which in a sense may be ascribed to ethnic conflict in present day parlance. The Iranians were of Aryan stock whereas the Turanians, by and large, descended from the TurkoMongoloid stock. This may be there, but the fire worship was neither the exclusive property of the Iranians nor of the Turanians. In the ruins of *Persepolis* near *Shiraz*, we find the images of more than 25 emissaries from different lands and climes arriving at the court of the Achaemenian King

Darius (Dara) to offer presents and homage-Researchers have tried to identify the countries represented by their emissaries through the respective robes the emissaries wore. The emissaries from the Turanian part of the empire are also represented. This should suggest that the fireworshipping religion had made inroads into deep Central Asia as it had made into northern India including Kashmir. It has to be remembered that Kashmir at that point of time was more a part of vast Central Asian region because of its climate, topography, trade routes and ethnic connections. Moreover, there were no boundaries separation it from the rest of the region. As late as the rule of Sultan Shihabu'd-Din, a large part of today's Afghanistan, NWFP and Punjab formed a part of his kingdom. Gandhara, modern Kandahar, was an integral part of Kashmir kingdom during the times of King Lalitaditya. As such, interaction between the Kashmiris and the peoples in Central Asian region was brisk.

Badakhshan and Pamir Mountain regions mostly fall in modern Tajikistan. Tajiks are the branch of Irano-Aryans, and therefore, ethnically distinct from the Turanians. But what was the Tajik territory of olden days of which *Shanameh* of Ferdowsi tells us at length, can be imagined by the fact that the people in Samarkand and Bukhara speak Tajiki / Farsi. The twin cities with their district areas were most unfortunately separated from Tajik land by the unimaginative cartographers of Soviet State in 1930s and given into the territory of the Uzbeks. This is an unnatural division of territory. But the point we want to make here is that the Irano-Tajik sphere of influence extended right up to Samarkand and Bukhara, which means the fringes of the Aral sea. To the east, its influence reached the foothills of the Himalayas - Kashmir and Kangra. *Tarikh-e Yamini*, the history of Mahmud of Ghazna tells us about the self-burning flames in Kangra emitted from the earth. So do we know of Soyambhava, the self-emitting flames in Bomai a village at the distance of a few kilometers from Sopore in Baramulla district in Kashmir. Both the places had become shrines during the Hindu period where a high priest performed the rituals pertaining to the worship of the fire.

In, Badakhshan mountain heights in Tajikistan, we have the most ancient habitats of the people of Zoroastrian faith. Their history is naturally to be traced to the days of emergence of Zoroaster in the region. They have preserved the traditions of the fire worshipping faith or the Zoroastrian religion, the Navroz, the Haft Seen, the Sizdeh Badar, the Mehrgan and the rest of it. The Zoroastrian prayers or what is traditionally known as *niyayish* or thanksgiving (*astoti* in Sanskrit) to the manifestations of nature, the sun, the air, the water, the oceans, etc. are in place. Again, they observe the bidden and the forbidden in Zoroastrian faith. The water and the fire are not to be defiled as that is tantamount to sin; the drinking of wine on feasts, the slow recitation of prayers (*zimzimeh*) the telling of beads, and the worship of the sun are also among the practices of the Zoroastrians of the Badakhshan-Pamir regions.

The Hindus of Kashmir have preserved these traditions and some of these have also trickled down to sections of Muslim society especially the Shias though with some modifications, The Navroz (*Pahlavi nok + roch*) is a permanent entry in the Pandit calendar and in faithful preservation of Zoroastrian tradition, it marks the vernal equinox or 21 of March, the first day of Zoroastrian New Year. In Kashmir, Shias are also known to be observing this feast. The haft seen tradition is that the Zoroastrians would fill a large container with seven things whose name begins with letter seen or the sound like *sabzeh* (turf), *samakh* (sort of herbal product), *sagar* (wine cup) etc. The Pandits call it *thal baron* or 'filling the platter' with handful of rice, pen, inkpot, flowers, milk, sugar, and the new Saptrishi calendar. The practice of a member of the family taking the platter in his hands early in the morning and showing it to every member of the house is precisely what the Zoroastrians in the aforesaid region of Tajikistan and also those in Iran have been doing. In Kashmir, the Pandits do it twice a year, on the morning of *nowroz*- the Zoroastrian New Year and on *Navreh*, (*nava + varsha*: sh and h being interchangeable) their own New Year on the basis of Saptrishi calendar. I do not know whether the few Zoroastrians that remain in Yezd and Kirman in Iran are allowed to hold on to these practices and customs by the Khumeinites today. The *sizdeh bedar* of the ancient Zoroastrians

remains a much liked tradition by the Kashmiris of all faiths down to this day called in their own language as badam warih, literally meaning the Almond Garden. This needs some explanation.

On the thirteenth day after nowroz, the people come out of their houses and proceed towards a garden to enjoy the onset of spring season. They attire themselves in gorgeous dress and carry with them eatables. Music and dance are part and parcel of the festivities. It is a big social gathering of enjoying the outdoor festival. In Kashmir, the garden lying to the north of the Hari Parbat foothills was marked for its thick almond tree plantation. As the almond tree blossoms first of all in the early spring in Kashmir, picnic to this garden became an established tradition. One can remember the groups of people of all faiths coming out to this garden to enjoy a family feast-eating, drinking tea, and enjoying the blossoming of the almond trees and the musicians entertaining the festive people. During the days of Bakhshi Ghulam Mohammad, this function rose to its fullness and pervaded all sections of society. Thus sizdeh badar of the Zoroastrians assumed the local colour of adam warih in Kashmir.

The Mehrgan is the autumnal festival, a sort of merriment and thanksgiving for a bumper harvest. The Zoroastrians enjoyed it as a big feast. In Kashmir, a modification of the feast remained in vogue with the Pandits especially of the rural Kashmir. This was called Berehbal. (I am unable to explain the etymology of this word). A dragged explanation would be that it is composed of two syllable, bereh + bal. Bal in Kashmiri language is usually the suffix added to a place where water is available. Thus we have Hazratbal, Sadrehbal, Yarbali, Nagbal etc. Bereh in rural Kashmir means 'the burrow' in the soil. Under this tradition, the members of the household used to come out on the paddy field, select a small place within the fields, sit there, offer thanks giving by pouring water and rice into the field and then eat the cooked food. With the ancient Zoroastrians this was somewhat elaborate custom and one difference that has been witnessed is the timing of the festival. In Zoroastrian Iran it was held in late autumn while in Kashmir it was held towards the closing days of the summer and just the beginning of autumn when paddy started ripening. Perhaps because the weather was harsher in Kashmir and the late autumn could be snowy, they had preponed the feast.

The practice of zimzimeh or mute prayers as observed by the ancient Zoroastrians is precisely what has come down to the ancient Kashmiris. This is also manifestly reflected in the thinking of the Iranians Sufis who have an apt axiom : dil ba yar dast ba kar meaning heart glued to God and hands glued to work. This is the essence of niyayish and zimzimeh or recitation practiced effectively and universally by the penitents in Kashmir be they Hindus or Muslims. The zikr of the Sufis and penitent and sumran of the Pandits are the two sides of the same coin with their counterfoil in zimzimeh of the Zoroastrians.

The custom of offering wine along with other ingredients like honey, milk, and ghee, sesame (tila in Sanskrit and tael in Kashmiri) to the flames is very common with Zoroastrian niyayish practice. The homa of the Zoroastrians Iranians is the soma of the vedic Aryans and of the Pandits of Kashmir. However the Muslims, who say that wine is forbidden in their religion, discarded the offering of wine. However, late Professor Farozanfar of Teheran, a world-renowned authority told this writer, that out of 42 kinds of drink only one kind, namely arak (liquor) is forbidden in Islam. The ritual of performing havan and giving of ahoti (offering) is very close to barsim guzari of the Zoroastrians. What makes me state it so categorically is that in both the rituals, twigs of mulberry tree of approximately one-foot length are cut and offered to fire. I visualize that mulberry was selected for one or two reasons. Its amber stays on for a long time; the twigs sprout quickly from the branch head and above all there must be some chemical property that makes it non-infectious or at least non-allergic.

I must make special mention of the yuguopavit ceremony of the Kashmiri Pandits in connection with civilizational links with Zoroastrians. The yugnopavit or the holy thread for the Hindus is a ceremony, which traces its origin in the Vedic history. After completing his period of study before the Guru, the pupil passes all the tests to be initiated into the Brahmanical order. Thread ceremony represents formal initiation into that order. Ti Brahman is generally referred as twice-born meaning

life before initiation and after initiation. Three strands of the holy thread represent three-fold properties of energy viz. creation, destruction and preservation.

The Zoroastrians call the holy thread as *kusti* or *Kushti*, from which we have the word *kushti* meaning the game of wrestling. The *kusti* was tied round the loins as against the Brahmanic way of slinging it from the neck and right arm. Catching hold of *kusti* meant not only the defeat of the loser but also a symbol of assault on faith. The Pandits also hold that shredding the holy thread means defiling faith. It must be remembered that in ancient Persian traditions, the defeat of a contestant in a wrestling match was announced if his rival caught him by his *kusti*. Hence the game of *kushti* or wrestling. Obviously, the word should be of Avestic origin and I plead to be excused for not being able to trace its etymology. But the Arabs gave it the name of *zunnar* though according to some Iranian scholars this also is not of Arabic but of Persian origin.

We have some such strange words in Persian as are both amusing and confusing. Take the case of a word *zindik* or *zindiq* meaning apostate. Its origin is in *Zand*, the commentary on Avesta. Those who, during the early days of Islam's domination on Iran, used to observe ancient Zoroastrian cultural traditions along with the nascent religion of Islam, were despised by the Muslims as half Muslims and were castigated and even charged of apostasy. They were called *zandiqs* or the followers of *Zand* meaning apostates or Zoroastrians. But the Arab lexicons believe it to be an Arabic word with unknown roots and etymology though in plural form it has been used as *zanadiqa*. This term is very common among Kashmiri Muslims when they have to use a very derogatory remark against somebody. When used in that sense, it, somehow, meant to convey that the person on the receiving end is outside the pale of Islam, which is a serious charge. Curious as it is, though this derogatory epithet is not now commonly used whether in Iran or in Central Asia, yet Kashmiris have not discarded it. And certainly it belongs to post-Islamic period.

Let us not confine only to Zoroastrian faith and civilizational symbols though of course their impact remains deep seated. Speaking of fire let me inform my readers that apart from the fact that the fire with the Pandits of Kashmir and of course with the Hindus as such, remains essentially a sanctified object. But Kashmiris have also ascribed social content to it as well. At the beginning of spring every year, children in Kashmir observe a little function by way of fun and not as a recognized festival. It is called *jataen-taen*. I am unable to trace its etymology but the first part *jataen* has something to do with *jyoti* of Sanskrit meaning the flame. Urchins bring out their *kangris* (firepots) in the compound, tie a rope length to it, put it to flames and go about making rounds so that it makes a circle of the flame till the stuff is consumed. I understand this should have something to say good-bye to winter. At places we see urchin's kindling a fire made of twigs and then leaping forward and backward over it for the sake of fun. This practice is very common with the Zoroastrians in Badakhshan. In fact this writer was once deep in the mountains of Tajikistan where there is sparse population. This was the beginning of spring and the same night the fun of leaping over the flames was observed.

History of ancient Iran tells us that leaping over the flames or passing through the flames meant a test of fidelity as well. In *Shahnameh* we find the story of *Siyavash* (or *Siyavashn*) passing through the leaping flames in order to prove his fidelity and innocence. In Indian mythology, we are told that *Sita* the wife of *Rama* had to pass through flames to prove her chastity. Again we are told in the poem *Nal Damyanti* that *Nal*, while passing through a jungle had to pass through fire, which did not harm him much but only changed his complexion dark. This is also true of *Siyavash*, which literally means blackish. In Hindu culture and especially in Kashmiri Pandit lore we have a term '*tsendrayan tsapun*' and '*Agni parikhasha*'. The latter is almost akin to Zoroastrian tradition of leaping over the flames. But *tsendrayan tsapun* is a desk book experiment with purification of mind and body. Pandits say that only one of their community is known history did go through that rigorous and almost unattainable exercise and she was none other than the great shavite *Lalleshwari*. The Kashmiri phrase '*nareh drav*' has to be understood in this background.

Coming closer to the mediaeval times, one has to be very cautious in attributing features of Kashmirian culture to the Central Asian origins and beginning with the southward destination of Islamic missionaries in early 14th century. Central Asian missionaries and the Sayyids did not nurture their thoughts and life styles in vacuum. Central Asia has been the most important centre from where civilization disseminated in a vast region.

Let me explain this point clearly. A close examination will reveal that the Shia religious institution in Iran is, by and large, reminiscent of the institution of mobids or the clerics of Zoroastrian faith. Social status of Ayatollah is precisely the replica of Zoroastrian mobid-e-mobidan. Their role in the governance and their influence with the social institutions is precisely what we find in Iran today under theocratic dispensation. The mosque has replaced the fire-temple (atesh-kadeh), but five times-a-day prayers, fasting, penance, lent, etc. are the practices not unknown to Zoroastrian civilisation. Even the dress and more particularly the turban that clerics tie round their head is precisely what the Zoroastrian priesthood used to wear. The only difference is that the Shia clerics use turbans of black colour while the Zoroastrians use turbans of white colour. But the way it is tied is precisely the way Zoroastrians tied.

Nearer home, Pandits of older age will recollect that the purohits (priestly class) among Pandits always tied a white, coloured turban around their head. For certain, the style of tying was precisely the one followed by the Zoroastrians and the Shila mullas. This was given the specific name as gorex dastar meaning the headgear of the clerics (dastar is Persian and not Sanskrit or Kashmiri). But if one looks at the photographs of Pandits who lived nearly a century ago, one will find that common Pandits also tied the turban round their head in the same fashion as the Zoroastrian mobids or the Ayatollahs tie. The source of this stable is to be found in Central Asia because the Mughal rulers, as we see their paintings, are also shown wearing the same style of headgear. The Gujjars of Kashmir and Jammu regions have till this day maintained this particular tradition and the Pandits have cast it aside.

I must also refer to the tradition of keeping horoscope and giving full attention to the science of astrology by ancient Zoroastrians. Shahnameh tells us repeatedly about the choosing of an auspicious occasion by the royalty for a new task or for a military adventure. Even as late as the closing years of 14th century, Tamerlane (Teymur or Timur), the great Central Asian conqueror, also used to ask his astrologer to find an auspicious occasion. Not only do the Pandits observe the same tradition; they have even made it so commonplace as to characterise it corruption and aberration. But strangely, the Shias of Kashmir do repose faith in astrological science and believe in picking an auspicious occasion. The Pandits call it saa't, an Arabic word meaning 'time' or 'point of time'. We find reverberations of this tradition in the histories of Mahmud of Ghazna, Tamerlane, Babur, Akbar, Jehangir, and also those of Shah Abbas II, the powerful Iranian Shia monarch of Safavi dynasty and contemporary of Akbar. On the other hand the Hindus never do anything without consulting the astrological table. Thus every Kashmiri Pandit has a horoscope which he treasures among personal property.

We know that most of the Shias in Kashmir do follow the tradition of keeping a horoscope and looking for the saa't (saat-e hasayn as they say which is the corruption of Arabic sa'at-ehasaneh) or the propitious occasion. The roots of this practice are deeper.

Sun worship is as old as the human history. But in some societies it attained great significance. The ancient Aryans of Iran called it Mehr parasti. The word Mehr is the corrupted form of Mithra or Mitra, one of the twelve Vedic (and also the Greek) names of the Sun. The Sun has been given the name of Khwarsheed in Persian, and in Avestic it is called hur, which becomes khwar in Pahlavi. Khwarsheed is composed of two parts; Khwar + sheed. While Khwar is the corrupted form of Pahlavi Hur (h and s sounds are interchangeable), therefore nur of Avesta is Sur = Surya of Sanskrit meaning the Sun. Sheed again is of Sanskrit origin shweta meaning white, which becomes sated or saped. in Persian and Kashmiri. Thus Khwarsheed is actually Khwarashweta or the white Sun. Khurasan, the eastern province of Iran also derives its name from khwar + aas + aan, the last part being the suffix. Aas is derived from Persian verbal noun aasdan meaning to come. In Kashmiri aas

is the past participle of the come. Thus Khurasan means the place where from the Sun comes or rises-the East.

Mithra worship or Mehr Parasti has been of much significance with the ancient Indo-Aryan race. In Iran, the last ruler of the Pahlavi dynasty had assumed the title of Aryamehr or the Son of the Aryas. In the state museum in Penjikand, a small town at a distance of about a hundred miles from Samarkand, (to which this writer had an opportunity of visiting way back in 1983), is preserved a round gold plate all broken into grooves at the round edge and the figure of human face carved on it. This has been explained as the symbol of Mithra, the Sun. In Samarkand, there is a madrassah of the times of later timurids (16-17th century) called Madrassah-e Sheridar. On its frontispiece one finds an original painting depicting the Lion in the background of the rising Sun in the shape of a human face emitting rays all around.

It will be recalled that ancient Kashmiris dedicated the finest and the most stately monument recognized by the archaeologists as a masterpiece of ancient temple architecture, to Sun God at Martand. Had it not been burnt and destroyed by fanatics, it would have been one of the finest monuments existing on earth by the side of celebrated Greek monuments of ancient times. This is what once the curator of the Kashmiri section at the British Museum told me in London.

Contribution of Kashmiri Buddhist scholars to the spread of Buddha's message in vast Central Asian region extending to Mongolia and to Eastern Turkestan has been recorded in the historical works. Chinese pilgrims Hiun Tsiang and O Kong came to Kashmir to study Buddhism and acquaint themselves with the Buddhist lore and ways of life. In Tibet, the Kashmiri Buddhist scholars Kamalshri and others- laid the foundation of Buddhist expansion, which became the faith of the Tibetans. If eminent scholars research the Tibetan manuscripts, I believe we may be able to lay our hands on some important and interesting information on the sources of culture.

Buddhist viharas (temples) were abundantly built in Kashmir. The word vihara or vihar corrupted into Kashmiri yar or har and now we find it suffixed to innumerable places names. In such place names, sometimes the original name remains as in Somyar (Saoma vihara), Tsandrehar (Chandra Vihara), Gutyar (Gupta Vihara), Nevidyar (Naweta Vihara), and at other times the original Sanskrit name is changed to Arabic/Persian as Khanyar. The more important Buddhist shrines retained their social importance even after the mass conversion of the people in Kashmir. Thus jamia Masjid of Srinagar has retained its social and religious significance that it had come to hold as the most outstanding Buddhist shrine in pre-Islamic times. Even a few years back, the Buddhist monks from Ladakh used to visit the place and circumvent it after the Buddhist tradition. The Bakhshi Muslims of Kashmir are the descendants of the Bhikshus of Buddhist times.

It has been the custom with the Buddhists to preserve the holy relics of Lord Buddha. We have learnt it from oral history that the tooth of Buddha remained deposited in the vihara at Hazratbal site and the Buddhists of Kashmir used to visit this shrine and pay homage to the holy relic. In Kashmiri the word bal like yar is suffixed to place names as mentioned earlier. Generally bal is suffixed to a place identified by the side of water be it river Jhelum, or lake, or spring or a stream. Thus we have yarbal (viharabala) meaning the place where vihara was situated. Since Hindu shrines and temples and viharas were generally situated by the side of water, hence viharabal = yarball. As stated above, in the case of Hazratbal, a word comprising two parts of hazrat + bal, the first part appears to have been changed from Sanskrit to Arabic (unless I am wrong) and the suffix has been left as it is. The shrine is just overlooking the placid waters of Dal Lake. Having lived for a long period in that vicinity in Srinagar, I have noted that the people of Hazratbal locality generally address the Holy Prophet as Hazrat. When they want to swear by the Holy Prophet, they say hazratan path whereas Muslims generally say nabiyas path.

Indian caravans laden with exotic merchandise traversed the length and breadth of Central Asia in ancient and mediaeval times. In Bukhara we have still a place called Sara-e Hindiyan meaning the lodging place of the Indians. I have had an opportunity of visiting this place in 1983. It is in fact an

oval shaped area with open compound in the middle and small cells 12 X 10 all around the compound that open into it. At the centre there is a pond of water made up of blue tiles. This shows that here the caravans were unloaded and the merchants rested in the rooms. Obviously this was the place where the merchants from Europe and Asia and China met to exchange their merchandise. Bukhara was one of the terminals of Silk Route.

Bukhara is the corrupted form of Vihara, the Buddhist temple. It is not just for anything that during the Islamic times, Bukhara became the second Mecca. The tradition of learning in Bukhara goes back to the days of the Buddhists. The site of Mir Arab madrassah in Bukhara must also have been the site of great Buddhist seat in pre-Islamic times. Its surroundings certainly suggest the type of peaceful atmosphere that we find in Sarnath. The other important place name Samarkand is composed of two parts, samar + kanda. Our research has shown us that the suffix 'kanda' so commonly found in Central Asian region is the corrupted form of Sanskrit 'Khanda' meaning part or portion. In Central Asia we have it in Tashkand, Khokand, Samarkand, Chimkand etc. In Kashmir this has taken the shape of Kund or Gund as Mirgund, Qazigund (Kanchankhanda where kanchan means gold just as Kanchan Chakra becomes Qazi Chak, the name of a Chak ruler of Kashmir).

Let us move to other facets of cultural life. The dress is an important facet, which lends credibility to identification. The common belief is that Kashmiri *feran* is the corrupted form of Persian *pirahan*. The Persian word has taken a few forms like *pirhan*, *payrahan*. In Persian this is used for a shirt and not for a gown or overdress as we suppose. In Kashmir villages people use the word *munul* for what is now called *feran*. In *Ain-e-Akbari*, Abul Fazl tells us that one of the clauses of agreement between Akbar and the Kashmiri delegation led by Sarfi was that Kashmiris would change their attire. In all probability, he introduced the gown of Central Asian style called *jameh*, which in Iran is better known by the word *qaba*. Kashmiris do not know *qaba* and by *jameh* they mean garments and rightly so. However a damsel clad in *jameh* and becoming the object of praise and infatuation for the poets (Rasul Mir, Mahjoor and other Kashmiri lyrical poets) generally means an assorted set of fine clothes exquisitely suiting the body of the beloved. In the Kashmiri verse *kazel kernam wuzel jamaey / me nyunam kameh divan dil*. the poet says that my beloved (here the female is the lover) turned my red clothes into dark (*kazal* is corrupted of *kajal*, the collyrium).

Munul and *pots* are two Kashmiri words (unfortunately I am not able to trace their etymology), which together made a set of over-wear for ordinary Kashmiris of olden days. *Munul* means woolen and owing to cold climate of Kashmir, its use had become very common. The common dress of Kashmiris of olden days was a *mitniti* with the undergarment *pots* meaning a double wear and not a single wear. *Pirahan* of the Iranians is a single wear. But we can understand that very poor people who could not afford the woolen garment had to remain content with only *pots*. Thus to emphasize poverty stricken situation, Kashmiris have the phrase *poets palav*. The boatmen of olden days generally regarded as among the poorest class even today recall *pots teh manan* to explain barest living. I have heard sadists say that our (Kashmiri) culture is nothing beyond *pots teh manan*. *Manan* is a fire pot made of baked or unbaked mud (not the *kangri*), and *pots* is the plain cotton garment. Hence to say that *feran* (Persian *pirahan*) was brought by the Mughals or by the missionaries from Central Asia does not appear to be the truth. All that they brought was the name, which the Kashmiris accepted for usage in their own way.

Kashmiri Pandit women of olden days had a peculiar dress and it was common to rural as well as urban womenfolk. The *feran* with *nerwar* (a sleeves decorating piece of cloth), *poots*, *zooj* and *tarangeh* comprising *kalehposh*, *tarangeh laath*, *sheeshah lath*, *fel tsetsan*, Now except for *Sheeshah lath* and *fel tsetsan* (narrow cloth roll and black headed needle), the rest of the items of head dress are extremely strange and exclusive to Pandit women.

The males had. no such peculiar headgear and it was simple white turban. If Kashmiris borrowed all the dress from Central Asia, then why should the Pandit women continue this rather cumbersome headgear? Obviously it is not only traditional for them but certainly carries some symbols. The *puts* has the shape of a forked adder and falls down over the shoulders reaching the ankles. The *zooj* too

has more or less the shape of a snake. Is it the hangover of Naga tradition? If snake represents Naga cult and continues with Kashmiris in one way or the other, then it needs to be pointed out that the bangles made of metal (generally silver) for Kashmiri women are the proof because its two ends are given the shape of snake-head.

The names are purely indigenous. Therefore kalehposh too should be an indigenous name and should have nothing to do with Persian kateh + posh (head cover) though very difficult to refute. Adorning of hair as in African societies, or parts of body with ornaments or tattooing of limbs etc. are all understandable. But why should have ancient Kashmiris prescribed a very cumbersome (and certainly not too attractive) headgear for their women?

This is also true of many other things. Take the case of fruits while seb (apple) is of Persian origin, we have different Kashmiri names for different varieties like tsunt, trel, and ambur. Likewise daen (pomegranate), dachh (grapes) tang (pear), and many other names are indigenous. Of course some of the names suggest their importation like tsenum (perhaps from Chinun or the fruit brought from China) Olubukhar (Alu Bukhara), alu means fruit with hard kernel inside. Evidently it was brought from Bukhara.

Bakery is certainly a Central Asian stuff. But I wonder why do we call him kaandur? is it an indigenous word like tsut (loaf)? We also freely say nan, which no doubt is a Persian work like other types of bread, lavaseh (Persian lavash) girdeh (Same in Persian), rogni tsut (combination of indigenous and Persian) etc. However it has to be remembered that the tradition of bakery is exclusive to the Central Asian culture. In Kashmir the Hindu bakers have borrowed the art from the Muslims though of course they bake a variety of bread slightly different in shape. But what is totally common is ochihwur a hard baked round bread of about three inches diameter and six inches circumference. The peculiarity is that sesame seed is sprinkled on top of this variety. This practice has been seen in Iran and Central Asia. Perhaps the use of sesame seeds is to make it bit oily because it is baked hard and tan. In Iran and Central Asia, a superior bread is besprinkled with white poppy and in Kashmir, when bread is made on order for distribution at some important and sensitive social function, then a bread of same dimensions is besprinkled with white poppy (Khashkhash). Another kind of loaf very common to all Kashmiris is kulchek (Persian kalucheh). This also is direct importation from Central Asia.

It should be noted that throughout the Muslim world, bread is very rarely made in homes. It is invariably brought from the bakery and as such bakery has an important place in Islamic social structure. This is not true of Hindus who prefer to make the bread in home. We are told by Persian historians that in olden days in Iran and in Afghanistan, bread was sold by measurement, then by weight and finally by pieces.

While I am speaking about bread (nan) is Central Asia, I would make a mention that a guest is always received in Central Asia by offering him bread and salt. he must break a piece, rub it into the salt and put the slice in his mouth as a mark of reciprocating hospitality. This has given rise to the phrase nan wa namak meaning sustenance. This has also given rise to phrases like namak haram or namak halal meaning faithful and faithless. The question is why salt? Obviously, it makes bread palatable and is perhaps the least expensive. From here we have got the Kashmiri idiom noonas saet tsut khaen (to eat bread with salt) meaning bare substance.

But I must remind my readers that Kashmiri Pandits have the unbroken tradition of giving bread and salt to the daughter when she proceeds to her in-laws house. This is not a gift but a custom, which must have its roots in history. Perhaps because shenad to go a long way and conveyance was not available in those days; or because the parents would remain contented that their daughter had something to eat if she was too shy to eat a full meal in her in-laws house etc. Social scientist may be able to explain it better. The tradition continues down to this day without break. It formed part of the traveling accessories together with atehgath or small pocket money for footing the distance.

Most of Kashmiri meat preparations carry Central Asian names-rogan josh, yakhni, biryani, kabab, kamargah, etc. Shashleek of Central Asia has been given the name of kanti in Kashmir. But I would concentrate on soup called shorba in Persian. We do not have the tradition of serving shorba (Shor means saltish as ab-e shor or salt water and ba means liquid or drink. Rice and meat cooked in butter or ghee is called aash in Central Asia but not in Iran. Thus we have aashpaz from Central Asia meaning one who cooks or the cook.

I cannot state with solid proof and knowledge that ancient Hindus of Kashmir were vegetarians. Perhaps climate and non-availability of vegetable during long winter months forced them to become meat eaters. But the preparations, though certainly of Iranian and Central Asian in origin, have undergone a drastic change. I presume the Mughals who were connoisseurs in culinary taste introduced these dishes.

Kashmiri Pandits, many believe, were mostly vegetarians. Cereals (dal) must have been their pet food because it is extensively cooked for feasts, social functions, and in homes. In some rituals, preparation of moons dal is a must. We are told that preparing and serving of masoor dal is an Islamic tradition traced to the Holy Prophet and his companions. Here I must clear one wrong impression so common among Kashmiris, The Muslims generally use the epithet of dalih bhattek for a Kashmiri Pandit by way of slander. Literally it means the Pandit who eats dal. Some think it denotes cowardice of Pandits because comparison to him a Muslim eats meat (lamb or beef) and is a strong and bold person. This is a wrong interpretation. The derogatory epithet dalih bhatteh is actually dayalu bhatta meaning a merciful/kind Pandit. Dayaloo in Sanskrit means merciful and Bhatta is the abbreviative of Bhattarika meaning a learned and devoted Pandit. Thus dayalo bhattarika became dalih bhatta (in many languages there is a tendency of shortening the words) and the derogatory connotation appended to it.

Among the Muslims of Kashmir until recent days, there has been the practice of giving copper utensils to a daughter at the time of her marriage. They call it tram meaning copper. Perhaps this metal does not rust and that should be the reason why utensils made of it are preferred. But there is a curious thing to say. The Pandits always made the accessories needed in their puja (Prayers) like tramer, naerkatsul etc. of copper but never used copper utensils in their kitchens. The use of copper (brenj in Persian) utensils in Central Asia was very common. In the biography of Maulana Rumi we are told that once he was passing through the market of utensil makers. He heard the rhythmic sound of a coppersmith beating copper into a plate. This made him ecstatic and he began to dance on the tune of copper beat. One coppersmith called Ya'qub Laith in mediaeval heart (Afghanistan) rose to become a powerful satrap. We have still numerous coppersmithies in Srinagar and other towns of Kashmir. A look at these workshops reminds one of mediaeval times when this was a flourishing craft.

The samavar of Kashmir is certainly an 18th century importation from Russian lands via Central Asia. But it appears that Kashmiri metal workers made some changes in its size and form. The type of samavar we have today, is not to be found in Central Asia. But certainly the cup called pyaleh in Central Asia and in Kashmir is identical in shape and size. In Kashmir it is called chinpyaleh thereby indicating its Chinese origin. The fact of the matter is that it must have been brought for the first time from Yarkand or Kashghar, which lie in Eastern Turkestan, with which regions we had a brisk trade in mediaeval times and which in turn were very close to Chinese mainland. They might have brought it from China, named it Chinpyaleh and passed it on to Kashmir. Pandits have the khos instead of pyaleh but then khos is the corrupted form of Persian kaseh pronounced as khaseh.

It has to be remembered that Central Asian influences in whatever walk of life these were could not remain restricted to Kashmir only. It is so because India remained under the sway of Central Asians (be those Afghans or Mongols of Tirmurids) for many centuries. During those periods, there was brisk interaction between Indians and Central Asian traders. Persian language and literature had made deep inroads into Indian intellectuals class whether in the north or in the south especially what later on became the Shahi kingdom in modern Hyderabad region. Since Kashmir was geographically

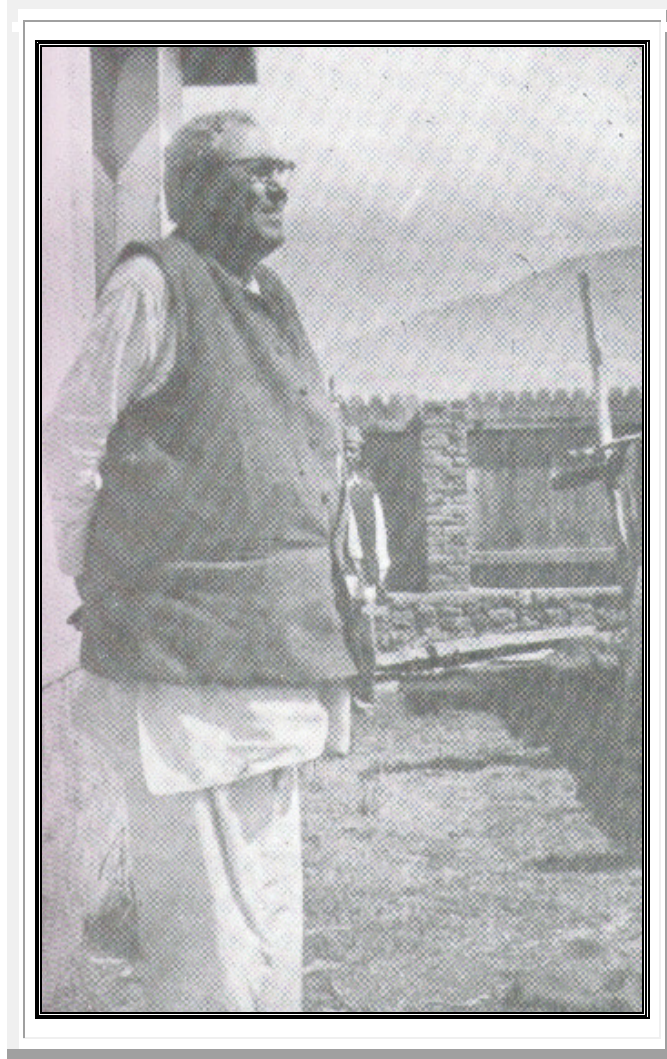
closer to Central Asia, and its climate was cold, it accepted the influences smoothly and without much change in earlier days.

When we discuss Kashmirian culture, we have to take a broad and universal look on the existing cultures in the neighbouring regions. Of Hindu impact, Kalhana gives us the fuller details. But of the impact from northern territories, a vast region indeed including Eastern Turkestan, we need to have a clear and scientific vision. When we say about Central Asian influences in Kashmir, we should go beyond the rise and expansion of Islam in 8th century. The history of central Asian civilization goes back to five thousand years of history, which cannot be ignored.

70 Illustrations



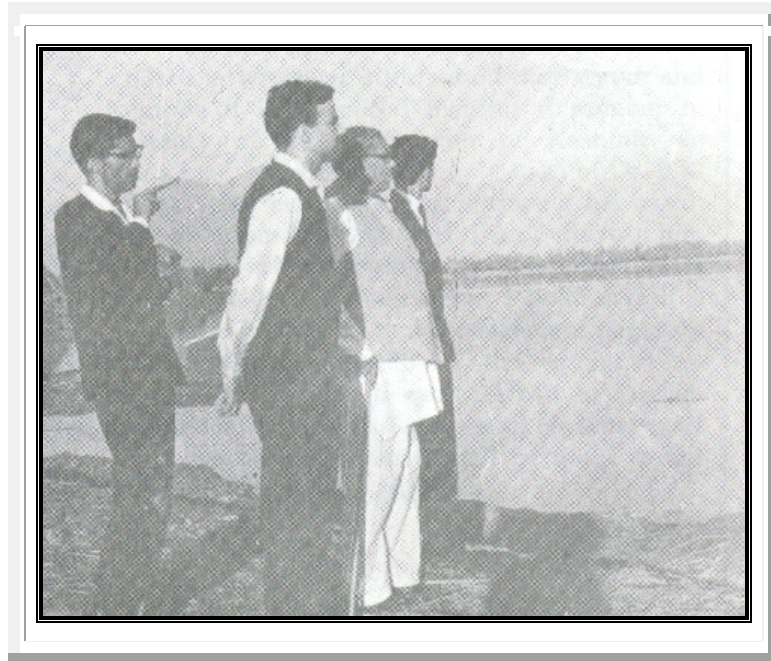
Pandit Kashyap Bhandhu
(24th March 1899 - 18th December 1985)



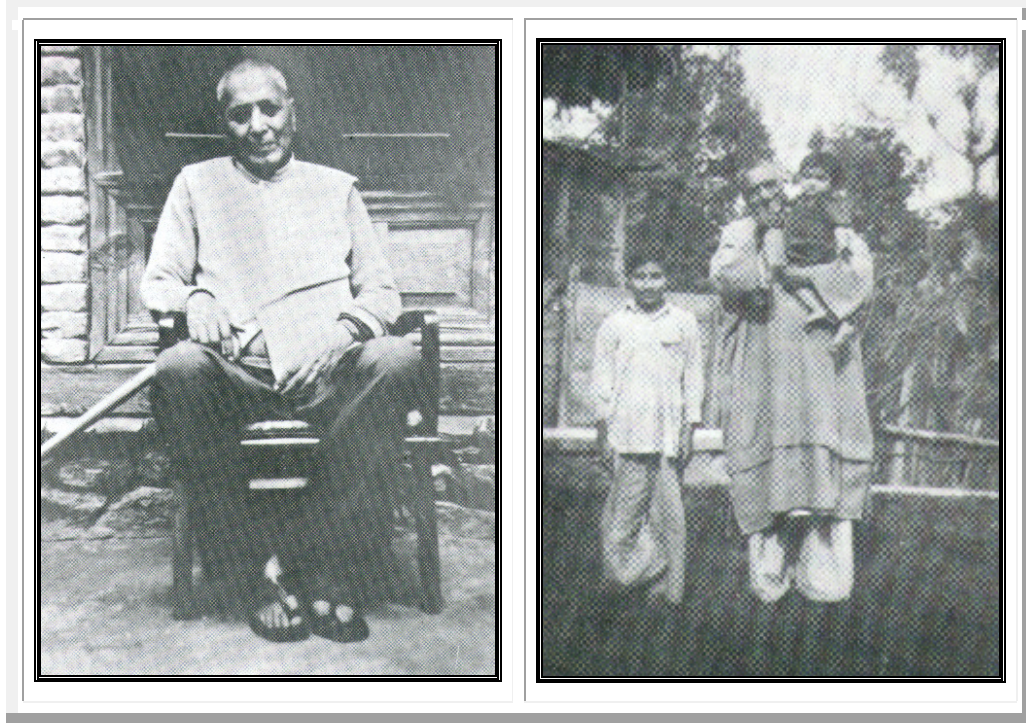
Taming the Wular, Sonawari 1966



Bhandhuji with Pandit Nehru



The Visionary: As Chief Project Officer, Sonawari, Model Dev. Project, 1964-67



Karamyogi Bhandhuji at his residence at Gairoo



A young Pandit couple with their child.

All their clothes except the man's cap (bought in Srinagar) are of the old style.

Pandit women wear golden rings and ear pendants as signs of wifhood.

Courtesy: Family & Kinship - A Study of Pandits of Rural Kashmir by Prof. T. N. Madan



Kashmiri Pandit Woman in Pheran with Taranga

Courtesy: Family & Kinship - A Study of Pandits of Rural Kashmir by Prof. T. N. Madan



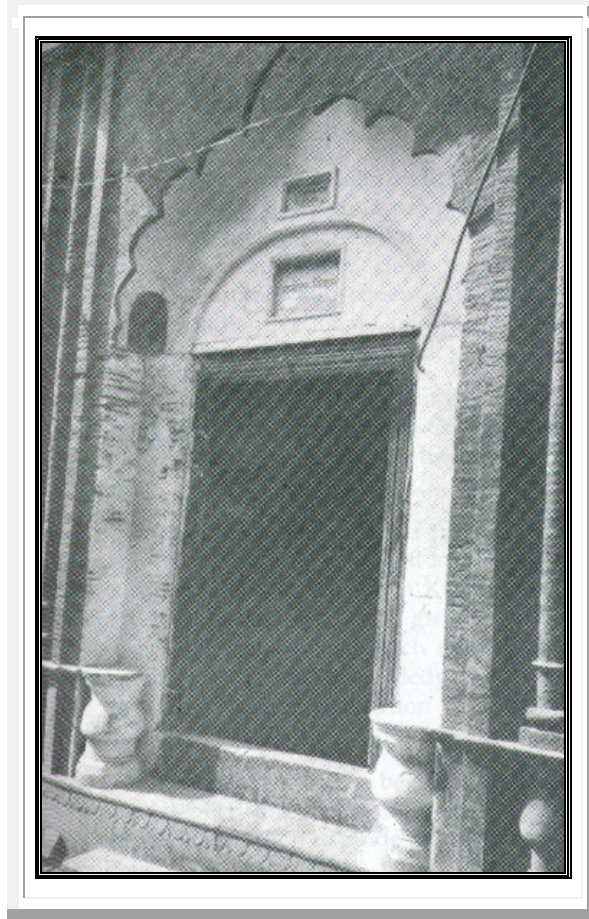
A young Pandit mother and her son. She is wearing a sari.
Courtesy: Family & Kinship - A Study of Pandits of Rural Kashmir by Prof. T. N. Madan



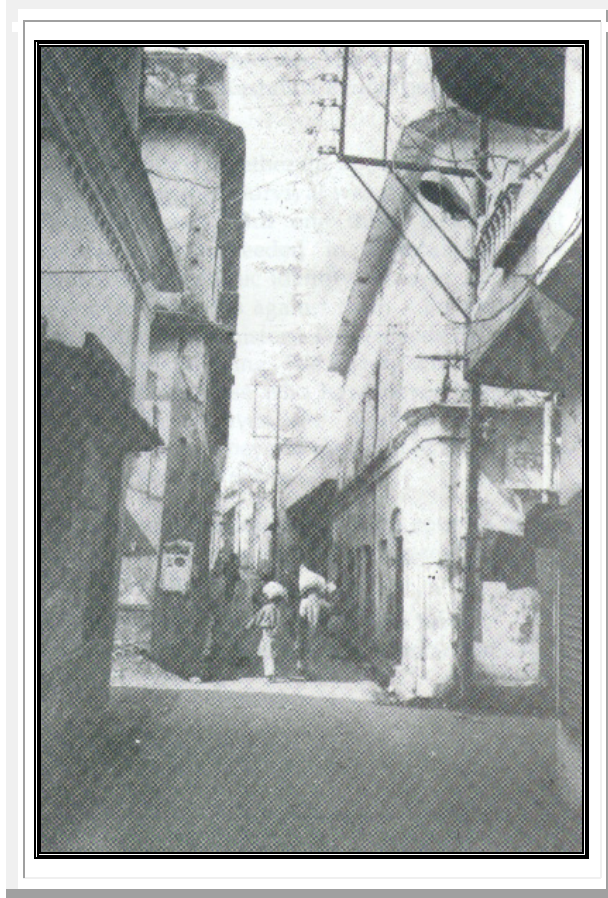
"Unto Thee" Dec. the 19th 1985 Razbal Gairoo



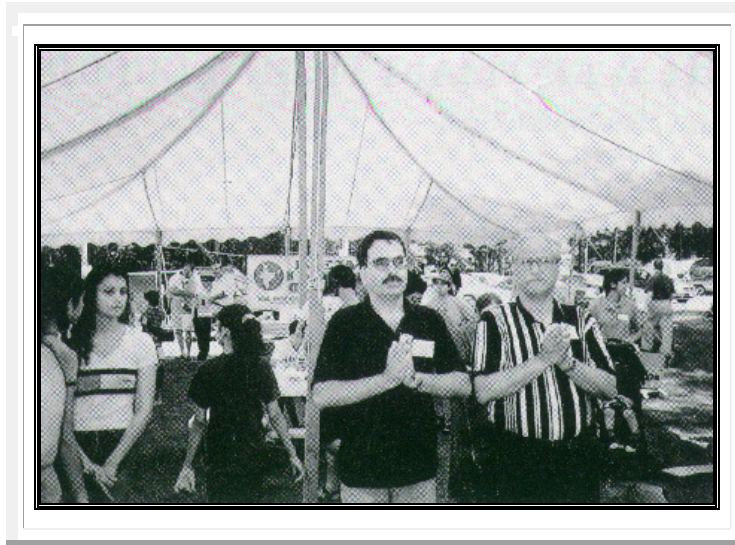
The Last Journey Dec. the 19th 1985 Gairoo



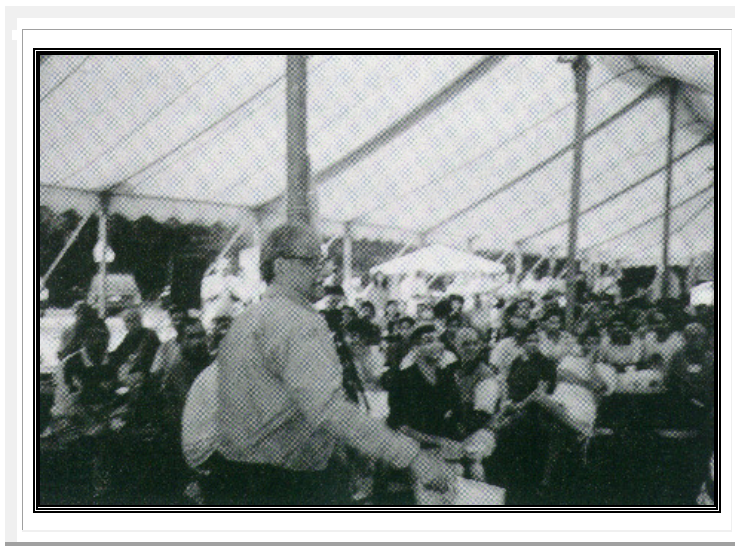
The historic haveli of Kaul Shargas the traditional wasiqedars of Oudh, in Kashmiri Mohalla.
It was built in 1883 A.D.



The main Kashmiri Mohalla Street on which during the Nawabi Period the rulers used to pass in a royal procession once in a year to pay their obeisance in Dargah Hazrat Abbas a most sacred shrine of Shia Muslims.



KOA-Annual Hawan at Connecticut, USA, July, 1999



Dr. B.K. Moza addressing KOA General Meeting at Connecticut, USA on 7th July, 1999; introducing VITASTA, Annual 1998-1999.



KOA Camp at Connecticut, July, 1999.
Exhibition of Publications on and Antiques of Kashmir.