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Swami Vivekananda at Kshir Bhawani, Kashmir
(Photo Courtesy: Sunil Shah & C.M.Bhat)

Between Ourselves

... M.L.Mattoo, President



Namaskar.

It gives me immense pleasure to thank our Biradari members, who participated in the community Hawan on 7th & 8th Feb., 2004. This could be a good beginning for the New Year by seeking blessings from "Maa Jagat Amba". I must say thanks to our young volunteers both girls and boys, who in large numbers, enthusiastically served "Naveed" to all present until last. This is possible only when you wish to make your presence felt particularly as this time the young girls did. These functions encourage interactions amongst the elders and the youngsters. Incidentally, we, on this day had the presence of Smt Shiela and Shri Nand Lal Zutshi (from USA) erstwhile President of KPA, a person who made our "Kashyap Bhavan" possible. He lauded the function for presence of large gathering of Biradri members.

- I am happy to convey that we have received a letter from CIDCO having allotted us a piece of land admeasuring 500-600 sq mts at Khargar, Navi Mumbai and the site will be selected later for which an option has been submitted. This has now posed a challenge to us to be prepared to draw our future plan for this plot of land and also contribute our might. So my appeal to our community members is to come forward with their willing donations to fulfill our objectives.
- I am proud to say that one of our brethren Major General Tej Kishen Kaul GOC-HQ Maharashtra & Gujarat Area has been awarded ATI VISHISHT SEVA MEDAL (AVSM) on the eve of Republic Day 2004, for his 36 years of distinguished service. Our congratulations to him.
- Shri Anupam Kher, cine artiste and chief of Film Censor Board has been awarded Padma Shri along with others. Our congratulations to him also.
- Shri Sanjay Kaul, President Kashmiri Overseas Association USA, visited Kashyap Bhawan on 1st February 2004 and had interaction with our BOT members. The purpose was to explore the areas of cooperation and collaboration in preserving/

protecting/ promoting KP culture. After the discussions he was highly impressed by our "PROJECT ZAAN," and other activities. In this meeting Shri N L Zutshi our past President was invited as special guest, who also gave a summary and laudable account of our Association from its inception to date.

- Navreh Mubarak to all.



Editorial

Kashmiri Pandit NRIs

... P.N.Wali



Some time back we wrote about Kashmiri Pandits living in the Valley. The community, as it is now, consists of several geo-physical segments, besides those left back in the valley. Those in Jammu – migrants and non-migrants are segments in themselves, as are those living in Delhi and those living in other parts of the country. Another segment that has developed so fast lately, is of those living outside India – Kashmiri Pandit – NRIs. Considering the overall small size of the community, this segment has achieved a sizeable dimension. And their assertion in the community affairs, whether social, economical or political has achieved significance.

The NRI Kashmiri Pandits have always been in various parts of the world. These can be classified into those who migrated before exodus and those who migrated consequent upon the exodus and those who did so after the exodus but not necessarily as a direct consequence thereof. No doubt there are KPs who sought foreign shores on being displaced from Kashmir during 1990 or around. You can find number of these – who were professionals like doctors, engineers, teachers etc. back in the valley. You can find bigger number of our young men who migrated looking for better opportunities in foreign lands, as many enterprising people from whole of India have done during last decade or so. Those who migrate from India are usually of two levels. The upper crust i.e., professionals etc. and the lower level i.e. labour and technicians. KPs who have migrated are from the upper crust generally.

Though reason for migration is more often for greener pastures, yet it is a difficult step. You have to adjust to an alien atmosphere, adapt to different ways of work, and prove yourself better. Life is often tough and demanding – with very little of social support system we enjoy back home.

We must say with pride that KP young men and women who have found niche in foreign lands have done fairly well for themselves and made us generally proud. And above all they have generally not forgotten their roots. They make it a point to meet other members of our community and in almost all cases, formed their local associations, which form the nucleus of their social interaction. They continue with our customs and traditions. They observe our festivals, most often jointly. In USA they have a three day camp once

in a year which is attended by people from different parts of USA (some times travelling more than a thousand miles). They savor our traditional cuisine and continue with it. Havans are jointly performed. Even marriages and yagnopavits have been performed. Interestingly some of these marriages have been within the boys and girls of our own community.

These people have shown remarkable understanding of the problems of the community as a whole. They have initiated actions. They have done a very good job in informing the international community about the realities of Kashmir situation, which even our government has not been able to do effectively. They have come with financial assistance for those back home who were deserving it the most. They have shown themselves involved in the affairs of the community as a whole. The websites run by them for Kashmir are an example of their intense interest.

I think it is time when body like AIKs could develop a formal and permanent connection with these brothers and sisters of the community who live in the world at large, which is shrinking so fast in the light of modern communication. They are a part of us and an important one, for that matter. An international directory of Kashmiri Pandits will go a long way to strengthen character and oneness of the community.



From the Pages of History
1947-48 : Indo-Pak War
... J.N.Kachroo



Many questions in connection with the 1947-48 Indo-Pak war are still shrouded in mystery. For instance, the reasons why India did not carry out the war into Pakistan, as she did in 1965, have often been debated. The arguments for or against the decisions or the actions taken then are generally based on the relevant military developments. But we have seen in the last Kargil Conflict how international diplomacy works and influences the actions of even the sovereign nations. Nawaz Sharief was called to Washington to listen to President Clinton. India declared that she would not cross LOC either to chase the invaders or smash the supply centres of men and material on the other side of the line. Balanced answers to such questions may be available if the role of the British government and the British officers holding high offices in India and Pakistan is considered along with the military developments.

It must be noted that the British government had a unique position at the time of transfer of power. Washington had accepted the leading role of Britain in the area of India and Pakistan. Britain had the political will and opportunity to safeguard its long term interests in the region. Above all, Britain had absolute control on the services and supplies (military) in India and Pakistan. Thus the British government had the power to influence the course of events in the immediate post-partition period which included the Junagadh crisis and more so the 1947-48 Indo-Pak war.

Without prejudicing the opinions of the individual readers, certain facts, some well known and others recent revelations are presented hereunder. It is hoped that they may help to find the true answers to the questions shrouded in mystery.

A) Policy/Objectives of Britain: The plan for the partition of India into India and Pakistan was announced on 3rd June 1947. Earlier the hopes were that India would be one country after the British withdrawal. The policy makers of Britain started thinking of the British interests in India after her independence. The following recommendations/minutes will make the intentions of the British clear:

1. In July 1946, the British Indian Chiefs of Staff Committee thought India would be an important military base because of her 'almost inexhaustible supply of manpower, rapidly growing industrial capacity and geo-strategic value'. The UK Chiefs of Staff added to the above observations.

"If the Indian demand for withdrawal were extended to include all British personnel including those in the services of the Indian government, the fulfillment of any of our strategic requirements would be improbable. It is in our view essential that the Indian Government should be persuaded to accept the assistance of the necessary number of British personnel."

These recommendations of the two Committees were forwarded by the then Viceroy, F.M.Wavel to Pathic Lawrence, the Secretary of State for India in July 1946.

2. In October 1946, the India office advised the Chiefs of Staff Committee: "If India were to split into two or more parts, the Moslem areas and the states would probably be anxious to remain in Common Wealth (C.W).

3. Basing their calculations on Nehru's Foreign Policy pronouncements, the India office (London) advised the Dominion office: "We think it unlikely that India will wish to continue in C.W. at any rate as at present constituted.

4. On 13th March 1947, at a meeting of the India and Burma Committee of the Cabinet, attended by Mountbatten (Viceroy-designate), it was agreed that the Viceroy (of India) should encourage any moves that might be taken by Indian leaders in favour of continuation of India within C.W.

5. On March 24th 1947, Nehru said to Mountbatten, "India wished to retain friendly ties with Britain but she could not stay in the C.W.

6. On April 11th 1947, Liaquat Ali said to Mountbatten, "Pakistan would want to remain in the C.W. and require British officers in her armed forces.

7. Jinnah said to Mountbatten, "You must realise that Pak is almost certain to ask for dominion status within the empire."

8. On 12th May 1947, the Chiefs of Staff came to the conclusion that: "From the strategic point of view, there were overwhelming arguments in favour of W.Pakistan remaining in the C.W., namely, that we should obtain important strategic facilities, the part of Karachi, air bases and the support of Moslem manpower in the future; be able to ensure the continued integrity of Afghanistan and be able to increase our prestige and improve our position throughout the Moslem world ..."

In June 1947, an agreement was reached between the British authorities, the Congress and the Muslim League on a plan for transfer of power to two independent states, India and Pakistan. Both the new states would initially continue to be in the C.W. with dominion status.

B) Security Arrangements:

Note: i) India was in the grip of unprecedented communal riots before the partition plan was announced. ii) Millions of people migrated across the borders of the proposed two countries. iii) Law and order was entrusted to armed forces commanded by a British Officer.

In the wake of the agreement for partition of India, the following security arrangements were agreed upon:

- 1) Field Marshal (F.M.) Auchinleck was the Commander-in Chief (C in C) of the pre-independence Indian Army. He assumed the post of supreme commander of India and Pakistan on 15th August 1947. He presided over the division of military assets between India and Pakistan. Also, he exercised administrative control over British officers serving in the armed forces of India and Pakistan.
- 2) General Lockhart was the C in C of Indian Army from August to December 1947, when he was made to resign.
- 3) General Roy Bucher was the C in C of the Indian Army from 1949 to 1951.
- 4) General Douglas Gracey was Chief of Staff Pakistan Army in 1947-48 and C in C Pak Army 1949-51.
- 5) A Defence Committee of the Cabinet (Indian) was constituted on 15th Oct. 1947, with the Governor General, Lord Mountbatten as its Chairman, ostensibly to prevent any misunderstanding or action by the British officers, wittingly or unwittingly. This Committee played a vital role during the Kashmir operations.
- 6) Military Supplies: For both India and Pakistan, Britain was the leading overseas partner in trade, industry, finance, military equipment, spares and oil supplies.
- 7) Britain was largely responsible to shape western opinion about happenings in the two dominions.

Role of British Officers Defined:

1) On 28/29 July 1947, the Viceroy, Lord Mountbatten addressed the Provisional Defence Council attended by Jinnah, Liaquat Ali Khan and Sardar Patel. He made the following points:

a) General Ree's force had been tasked to put down disturbances. b) British officers were in every unit of force. c) They (the British officers) were the best safeguards against attempts to subvert troops. d) Their presence would refrain troops of the two dominions from fighting each other, since under no circumstances could British officers be ranged on opposite sides.

2) Immediately after the transfer of power, F.M. Auchinleck, the Supreme Commander issued the following order which was already approved by Attlee:

"On receipt of the code word "Stand Down", all British officers and other ranks shall cease forthwith to take any part in the command and administration of armed forces in India and Pakistan.

Keeping the above mentioned Imperial Objectives and Security scenario in view, we might find dispassionate answers to contentious questions such as: Why did India not march into Pakistan; or why did India accept the cease-fire, etc.

(To be continued)

Ref: War and Diplomacy in Kashmir 1947-48 by C.Dasgupta.

Health

Kiwi Fruit

... T. K. Khushu, Bangalore



It was originally named 'Chinese Gooseberry'. The fruit was grown in China as a wild plant. Newzealand introduced Chinese Gooseberry in that country and cultivated superior varieties of this fruit and named it 'Kiwi Fruit'.

It is also grown commercially in some European countries. Kiwi Fruit plants have been introduced in India and is successfully grown in Himachal Pradesh. Results are encouraging in Ramban of Doda District in Jammu, where plant material has been imported from Italy. At present, four varieties are existing at Advance Centre for Horticulture, Govindpora, Ramban, namely i) Haywards, ii) Alison, iii) Tomuri and iv) Abbott. Out of this, first three varieties were received from Italy and last one from Himachal Pradesh. The Kiwi Fruit plant is uni-sexual and hence requires a pollinizer, and Tomuri variety serves the purpose. Multiplication of Kiwi Fruit is in progress at Horticulture Farm ,Ramban, and at Zainpora, Shopian in Pulwama District of Kashmir.

How to serve and get creative with Kiwi Fruit:

- 1) Since Kiwi by itself is such an attractive and flavourable fruit, the best way to serve it is by itself.
- 2) You can eat the fuzzy skin on the outside of the fruit. The skin is very thin and just needs to be rinsed and rubbed lightly to dry. Then, cut in quarters like an apple and enjoy skin and all. It can also be eaten whole with the skin, once the fuzzy is rubbed off.
- 3) Another quick and simple way to eat Kiwi Fruit is to cut the fruit in half and eat it with a spoon.
- 4) It is easy to peel Kiwi Fruit. First cut off the top and bottom ends, then peel down the sides with vegetable peeler or knife. Now just slice or quarter into bit size pieces and enjoy its refreshing taste.
- 5) The fruit can be sliced into wheels and can be used to garnish a fruit salad. The fruit not only accents colour, but also provides a contrast in taste to the other items in salad.
- 6) Serve sliced Kiwi Fruit with roasted chicken or cheese tikkas as for inviting appetiser.
- 7) Combine Kiwi slices with banana, apple and other fruits and top with honey and curd or cream for an exciting fruit salad.
- 8) Kiwi Fruit emerald goodness is simply beautiful as a topping for ice creams, cakes and custards.
- 9) Put 2 or 3 Kiwi Fruits in a blender and mix with your favourite juice. Orange and pineapple compliment it well.

One serving of two medium sized Kiwi Fruit is:

- 1) An excellent source of Vitamin C, offering sixty mgs per serving.
- 2) A good source dietary fiber with 4 grams per serving. 16% of recommended dietary allowance (RDA).
- 3) A good source of Potassium, containing more than 10% RDA.
- 4) A good source of

Vitamin E, which is extremely hard to find in low fat food sources. 5) A patent source of Antioxidants, containing a wealth of Phytonutrients including Carotenoids, Lutein, Phenolcs, Flavonoids and Chlorophyll. 6) A remarkably good complement of Aminoacids, the building blocks of protein. 7) Very low in Sodium and contains no Cholesterol virtually no fat. 8) A significant source of Folic acid, copper, Magnesium and Maganese, all of which are limited in the Indian diet. 9) far more nutritious than apple, with fewer calories. 10) More than twice as much as Vitamin C as in orange. 11) Having far more Potassium than a banana or citrus fruit. 12) Contains an enzyme called Actinidin, which makes Kiwi Fruit a wonderful meat tenderiser.



Viewpoint**To Write or Not to Write****... J.L.Manwati**

Over the years, Kashmiri Pandits' Association (KPA) has been embroiled in a Hamlet-like dilemma 'whether to take a Political Stance or not', on a given situation viz-a-viz the fate of Kashmiri Pandits, particularly in the post-exodus era or to project its views about the political dispensation towards the community, because our Association is a Socio-Cultural Organisation and obviously a-political in character. Basically, all such welfare/charitable Trusts, Associations or Samitis have mandatory obligation, under the various Trust Acts obtainable in the country, to incorporate a provision in their constitution which ensures non-indulgence in any political activity.

When I took over as the President of KPA in 1998, the frequency of the violent outburst against our community had considerably ebbed down. But the massacre at Wondhama did send shivers down the spine of every Pandit wherever he was. The Kashmiri Associations/Samitis of all hues utilised all the avenues of protestation against the barbaric and dastardly act.

But, we at KPA Mumbai fettered by the Constitutional limitations couldn't give vent to our seething wrath in any vociferous form. The Association had to remain content with a 'Resolution' passed at its BOT meeting, no doubt with all consternation. Simultaneously, when I learnt that Kashmiri Samiti, Delhi (KSD) had made its presence felt on the issue by aggressive posture in the Capital, I asked Shri Gadoo, the then President of KSD as to how they transgress blatantly the constitutional limitations by taking such political overtures. In an obdurate manner he said, '...at such times, we shelve the constitutional provisos in the shelves of KSD office'.

It made me ponder. Are we Kashmiri Pandits in Mumbai more law abiding, or have we grown thick-skinned, or, are we a disillusioned lot? These thoughts kept perturbing me, till one day, I was invited by an NGO in Mumbai to be part of a 'seminar on Kashmir', where Director of Information of US Embassy in Delhi was the chief guest. Trying to unshackle myself from the constitutional fetters, I prepared a matter-of-fact and a hard hitting brief on the plight of Kashmiri Pandits diaspora which contained candid illustrations fully supported by media gleanings for its veracity, as to what brought situation in the Valley to such a sordid mess which forced Kashmiri Pandits to flee the Valley. A day before, when I was supposed to interact with the US Embassy official, I read out the excerpts of the brief to Shri Moti Kaul and Shri P.N.Wali, both Ex-Presidents of KPA to seek their opinion. Looking at Wali Sahib, Shri Moti Kaul, an ardent and vocal proponent of Panun Kashmir, remarked, "Wali Sahib, were we ever such audacious"? My soaring spirits hit the nether.

Now-a-days almost all the official organs/publications of various Kashmiri samitis do take liberty to write, discuss, debate and even pass judgements on the political situation of the State viz-a viz Kashmiri Pandits except KPA Mumbai, which keeps such contentious issues at barge-pole distance.

Let us deliberate upon this aspect. Do these write-ups, deliberations, political workshops/seminars contributed or organised by those Constitutionally-appointed or self-appointed bodies make any dent on the thinking of the Government of India or the State Government. Or do such exercises help to ameliorate the conditions of KPs in any manner? Looking at the track-record, the answer is big 'No'. Such steps, however, one would agree, help to broaden the vision of thinking people but in terms of tangible results nothing substantial is achieved.

The most crucial and focal point of discussion these days within the community revolves around 'Whether the time is appropriate for KPs to return to the Valley'? There is no unanimity on the issue within the various Pandit outfits. Mufti Sarkar has already created a cluster of 300 flats in District Badgam for rehabilitation of KPs, which still continues to be No. 2 militant infested area after Pulwama/Shopian in Anantnag district. The government is trying to allure Pandits with all sorts of baits so that it could claim even a minimal success in their professed rehabilitation plans. 35 KP families, it is said, have already filed their affidavits with the State government showing their willingness to return. Come March/April, Government may exercise pressure on the government servants who are recipient of Migrant Salary to resume their duties in Srinagar in the first place. But the government itself is wary if their policy would have the desired effect. It is unfortunate that KPs do not have an effective and united political outfit which could have taken initiative and discussed thread-bare the pros and cons of the 'Return' with the government. Our dissensions within our community is our bane.

Panun Kashmir (Agnishekhar) and Panun Kashmir (Chrango) factions hold almost similar views to the 'Return Phenomena', yet, this site attitudinal differences at the implementation level. A slogan 'Clandistine Reversal of Exodus' has been thrown up by Dr. Agnishekhar. But isn't Dr. Agnishekhar concious that the fissiparous tendency within the 'Panun Kashmir' as such, has encouraged the Government to engage its agents to rope in Kashmiri Pandits disillusioned with their leadership.

I think KPA Mumbai is better off remaining a-political in its character; for, politics in general is murky and let KPA refrain from making it murkier.

Our Heritage

Aspects of Kashmiri Pandit Culture - 2

... Raj Nath Bhat (BHU)



Marriage

Several rituals are associated with marriage whose observance begins nearly a week before the wedding day. The bride's family begins with what is known as '*garnāvay*' (literally: *get made up*) when the hair of the bride are let loose. This is followed by '*sātū mänz*' (first henna or auspicious henna) when henna is applied to the bride and the groom by their respective mothers and aunts. These rituals are attended by near relatives and neighbours. '*mänzirät*' (henna night) is the first major event when all the relatives-men, women and children in the extended families assemble at the girl's and the boy's respective places. This is a night of much rejoicing and feasting. The evening meal is followed by a series of ceremonial acts. Henna is pasted on the hands and feet of the bride and the groom in their respective places and almost every young boy and all women and girls paste henna on their hands and elderly women sing traditional songs. Before pasting henna, maternal aunt (*maami*) washes the feet and hands of the bride and the groom, and the paternal aunt (*buā*) applies henna, and the maternal aunt (*maasi*) burns incense to ward off evil. Meanwhile women, girls and boys sing traditional ditties as well as popular songs appropriate to the occasion.

While the singing, & henna pasting is on, the bride as well as the groom are given a '*kanī shrän*' (thorough bath) by aunts and sisters-in-law to prepare them for '*dīvgòn*', the entrance of Devas. After the ceremonial bath, the boy and the girl wear clothes brought by their respective maternal uncles. The bride is made to wear '*déjìhòr*' - a gold ornament, and '*kalpùsh*' - a variety of headgear.

'*déjìhòr*' is tied to a gold chain known as '*ath*' which is provided by the groom's family on the wedding day to complete the holy alliance between Shiva - the groom, and Parvati - the bride.

'*dīvgòn*' is the religious ritual performed after the bath. The family purohit performs a small yajna on this occasion. '*dīvgòn*', it is believed, transforms the bride and the groom into 'Devas'.

On the wedding day, the groom wears a colourful dress with a saffron-coloured turban on his head. He is made to stand on a beautifully made '*vyùg*' (rangoli) in the front compound of the house where parents, relatives and friends put garlands made of fresh plucked flowers, of cardamom and currency notes round the groom's neck. A cousin holds a flower-decked umbrella to protect the groom against evil. Conch-shells are blown,

ditties are sung and the groom's party moves towards the bride's place usually in cars and other modes of transport.

Conch-shells announce the arrival of the groom and his party at the bride's place where the lane leading to the main entrance to the house is beautifully decorated with colourful flowers and dyed saw-dust. Upon entering the compound of the bride's house, the groom is welcomed by traditional songs sung by the bride's relations. He is put on a *rangoli* where the bride draped in a colourful silk Saree is made to stand beside him on his left side. There is another round of garlanding from the girl's relatives. Then the mother of the bride comes with a *thali* of small lighted lamps made of kneaded rice flour and an assortment of sweets and makes the groom and the bride eat from the same piece of sweet a couple of times. After this the bride is taken back into the house and the groom is made to stand at the main door of the house for a short '*dvar puzà*' (door prayers). The groom's party joins the bride's relatives in a very rich feast. Meanwhile the bride and the groom are seated in a beautifully decorated room for a series of rituals and ceremonies amidst chanting of Sanskrit mantras for several hours with little breaks in between. During these ceremonies, the bride is supported by her maternal uncle. The purohits of the two families recite mantras and make the bride, groom and their parents to perform a number of rituals with fire (*agni*) as the witness. The boy and the girl take seven rounds of the *agni-kund* (spring of fire) and vow to live together in prosperity and adversity, in joy as well as in sorrow, till they are separated by death. '*lâgûn*', as this ceremony is called, is followed by '*pòshû puzà*' (showering of flowers) in which a red shawl is spread over the bride and the groom, held at four edges by four people, and amidst recitation of *shlokas* all the elderly people shower flowers on the two 'devtas'. After this ceremony the bride and the groom are taken to the kitchen and made to eat from the same plate.

A '*vyûg*' (*rangoli*) is laid in the compound and the bride and the groom stand on it. Now the bride joins the groom to the groom's place where yet another *rangoli* is laid and the bride and the groom are made to stand on it. Here the groom's party relaxes and the bride is made to wear '*ath*', the gold chain which is attached to '*déjìhòr*'. Her hair and head-gear '*tarûngû*' are tied and she is made to wear a saree given to her by the groom's family.

After this they return to the bride's place with a small party comprising the groom's father, brothers, sisters, brothers-in-law, and a couple of friends. As a member of her new family, she is now a guest at her parent's place. The groom's party asks the bride's parents to send her (the bride) to her family (the in-laws). After a little tea, the party leaves for the groom's place. A younger brother/sister/cousin of the bride accompanies the party to the groom's place. On the next day or a couple of days later depending upon the *mahoorat* (auspicious day), the newly married couple visit the wife's parents. This visit is known as '*satràt*' or '*phîrsàl*'. Upon reaching the wife's parent's place, the man and wife are welcomed with '*àlat*' - a thali with water, rice, coins and flowers.

The nuptials in their utterances, promises, and hopes symbolize a great social transition in the life of the bride and the bridegroom. They have to earn their own livelihood, procreate children and discharge their obligations towards Gods, parents, children and other creatures of the world. The nuptial ceremonies these address all aspects of married life: biological, physical, and mental.

During the first year after marriage the girl's parents send gifts to the groom's place on a number of occasion in the form of cash, clothes, sweets, fruits, & cooked food. Gifts are sent on the birthdays of the groom, the bride & groom's parents; prasad in the form of wanuts and baked bread etc. on Shivratri (*hèrats bòg*), fruits, sweets etc. on Janamashtami and Diwali; '*pòlàv*' etc. on '*khétsí màvas*'; During the month of Magar a special ceremony known as '*shíshúr*' is solemnized when the bride is provided with a special '*kàngûr*'-a brazier used during winter, and '*shíshúr*' (*til* seeds wrapped in a piece of silk) is tied on her upper garment. On this day, near relatives, especially women, of the groom's family are invited and the girl's parents send gifts in the form of clothes, cash, to their daughter .

lath môklàvûnⁱ :

During her first pregnancy, the girl's parents invite her to their home, and after a little puja, she is made to wear a new headgear '*tarûngû*'. Then accompanied by a sister / cousin, she goes back to her home with milk, clothes, cash, baked bread & other gifts.

sôndar :

On the seventh day after delivery, the mother and the baby are given a hot bath. Special vegetarian / non-vegetarian dishes are prepared on the occasion. Pieces of paper or '*búrzû*' (birch bark) are burnt in an earthen plate and circled thrice round the heads of the mother and the baby to ward off evil. Seven plates of special food are served to the paternal aunts of the baby. This is exclusively a women's ceremony. On this day the mother's parents send '*trûy phót*' (wife's basket) which contains clothes, rotis, sugar, spices, cash for the newborn, and its parents and grandparents.

kàh nèthar :

This is the religious ceremony of purification. On the 11th day after childbirth, a small 'hawan' is performed in the house and a *tilak* is applied on the forehead of the newborn . The baby's maternal grandparents send clothes on the occasion. This ends '*hòntsh*' (impure effect) in the family.

On the 12th day the baby is put on a rangoli laid in the house-threshold (porch) and a piece of sweet is touched to its lips, the family elders shower blessings on the baby. The baby & the mother visit its maternal grandparents where they may stay for a few days. On their return, the grandparents send baked items mutton preparations, curds, milk & clothes for the baby, its parents and paternal grandparents.

mèkhlà or mèkhal :

In the past the sacred thread ceremony of boy was performed when he would become seven years old, i.e. when he would be able to wash the sacred thread '*yòní'* (jeniv) and recite the "Gayatri Mantra". Usually, all the boys in the family are made to wear the sacred thread together in a single ceremony. '*mèkhlà'* or yajnopavit involves all the ceremonies and rituals, like '*mänzíràt'*, '*dívòn'*" etc. associated with a marriage ceremony. After '*dívòn'* the boys' (called '*mèkhlí mahàràzú'* - mekhla grooms), heads are shaven and they are made to wear saffron-coloured robes.

Mothers, and paternal aunts wear red and white thread '*nàrívan'* on their ears and a huge '*agni-kund'* is prepared where seven purohits recite vedic mantras for nearly 12 hours and ghee, jaggery, rice and paddy are constantly poured into the agni-kund to please the devtas and seek their blessing. For the whole day relatives and friends come to this 'Hawan Pandal' and the eldest of the '*mèkhlí mahàràzú'* begs of them to give '*dakshínà'* (offerings) for the gurus (the purohits), which the visitors are pleased to give him '*àbìd'* (dakshina). Towards the evening the family-purohit asks the father of the mekhla grooms to put the sacred thread on them. This is a very emotional moment for the purohits as well as the father, the members of the family, and relatives. The chanting of mantras rises to the highest pitch and the mekhla-grooms are made to wear the sacred thread, marking their entrance into the pure brahmanical fold. This begins their brahmachari period, the first stage of Hindu life, when they seek only knowledge and wisdom. After this the Guru (family-purohit) whispers the Gayatri Mantra into the ears of the mekhla grooms. They are directed to recite this mantra every morning after taking a bath.

Once the yajna is concluded, the maternal uncle(s) of the mekhla –grooms takes them to a nearby temple. Meanwhile '*prasad'* in the form of rice, cereals, vegetables is served to all the relatives and friends including the mekhla grooms, and their parents who observe a fast for the whole day.

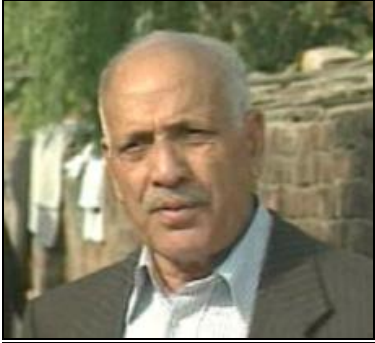
The next day (*kôshalhòm*) is observed as a day of feasting when mutton preparations are served. A day or two later, depending upon the position of the planets, sweet rice '*khír'* is prepared and a small '*puja'* held. After this the mekhla-grooms are made to put on a new sacred thread and the mothers and the aunts remove the '*nàrívan'*. This brings to an end the rituals connected with the yajnopavit ceremony.

- To be continued

Language

Script for Kashmiri Language - 1

... Dr. K.N.Pandita



From a few exchange of dispatches between the Project Zaan organizers, I understand that the question of evolving a scientific script for written Kashmiri is under focus. I am not aware of its details but I think that something is talked about Hindi/Sharada and Roman scripts.

The only known script for Kashmiri language is that of Sharada. We have many manuscripts still extant in various libraries, archives and private possession in and outside Kashmir. I am not sure that a scientific study of the efficacy of this script for Kashmiri language has been made. Also the question of when did this script come into existence is also a moot point. Apart from this, what changes took place in the philology of Kashmiri and whether those changes were incorporated in the Sharada script is also not elaborated anywhere. However, I am not denying the importance of Sharada script that was in vogue in Kashmir a couple of centuries before Kalhana wrote his chronicle. The manuscript of Rajatarangini on which Stein worked, and is preserved in Germany, is in Sharada. Stein had to study it and perfect it with the learned Kashmiri Pandits in Srinagar of whom he is highly appreciative. With the advent of the Muslim rule in about AD 1339, Sharada continued to be in use for a number of years. But simultaneously Persian Arabic script was also introduced. Down to the times of Zainu'l-Abidin, both scripts continued to be used, Persian by the ruling class and the elite that had converted to Islamic faith and Sharada by the plebeians and particularly the Purohit class who were most concerned with theological and astronomical literature. Though Sharada remained the script for writing Kashmiri for many years after the rise of the Sultans, yet Sanskrit continued to be the mainstay of Kashmirian literary and historical scholarship. The Brahmans and the Purohit class, if they meant to maintain their reputation as the custodians of ancient Hindu Kashmirian lore, had to perfect their knowledge of Sanskrit language and literature. The fact of the matter is that not only during those early days of transition, even in later times and also now, when we talk about the Kashmiri Pandit scholarship, we unmistakably mean Sanskrit scholarship. In this scenario, Sharada remained limited to writing some of the

Kashmiri texts and recording such matter as had liturgical content. In this sense it is not perhaps very safe to say that Sharada script is perfect to represent all vowel and consonant sounds of Kashmirian language.

Having said that, we know the history of decline of both Sanskrit and Sharada in Kashmir. The period of transition was over and Persian written in Arabic script replaced Sanskrit as well as Sharada. This happened because in the new social milieu, only Persian had official position and support. The only remarkable thing is that during the transition period, there were Pandit scholars who had streamlined command on both languages, Sanskrit and Persian. And there were also some local Muslim scholars in the same category, who, obviously converts to the new faith, did retain their indigenous culture and traditions though at some cost. With the rise of the Sultans followed by the Sayyids of Baihaq and then the Chaks, only Persian language received full patronage from the royalty and acceptability with the common Kashmirian literati. I don't think any of the Muslim rulers ever felt the necessity of evolving a script for Kashmiri or reviving the Sharada script of olden days. It is true that a bias against Sanskrit and Sharada developed, and the small Pandit community continued for some time to record their liturgical fund in one of the two languages/scripts viz. Sanskrit and Sharada. Persian flourished for a long time, from 1339 to 1846, a period of nearly five hundred years. I am not going to deal with this aspect except to reiterate that Persian being a very sweet language with very simple grammar and almost musical intonation supported by very rich prose and poetry genres of literature, became very quickly acceptable to the Kashmiris. Perhaps the humanistic teachings of stalwarts of Persian poetry and prose writings left a deep impress on the minds of Kashmiris. The Pandit Karkuns had to learn Persian in order to earn a living by doing clerical jobs. In the process, the major segment of Pandit karkuns lost touch with both Sanskrit and Sharada and when the Afghans seized power in Kashmir in the early decades of 18th century, the remnant of the Pandit community identified itself with the new and imported cultural ethos. The Muslims of Kashmir, if and when they needed, began adopting Persian script for Kashmiri idiom. It was not a policy matter with the contemporary government for the government never needed it. It was only on personal level.

With Sikhs assuming power in Kashmir, Persian continued to be the official and formal language of Kashmir. Historical record available to us today of that period is all in Persian, especially historical fund. Birbal Kachroo, a Pandit scholar of the day, wrote the history of Kashmir in Persian. Many Pandit Persian versifiers earned a name during this period. During the later period of Maharaja Ranbir Singh, Urdu gradually began to replace Persian. I have myself examined minutes of cabinet meetings of Maharaja Pratap Singh written in Urdu. We can find these reports in the archives department with J&K Government. The reason for this shift was that at that point of time, interaction between the State government and people, with the Punjab government and people received a

strong boost. In other words, this was the beginning of exposure of Kashmir to the world outside. As Urdu grew to replace Farsi and interaction between Kashmiris and outsiders increased phenomenally, some literate Kashmiris with taste in letters, began to use Urdu script for writing Kashmiri. They had no innovative skills to adapt the Urdu script because the complexity of Kashmiri pronunciation defied such attempts. We can say that every writer adopting Urdu script for Kashmiri had his own methodology and a uniform code of scripts was totally absent. The story of Kashmiri script in post-accession period or post-independence period is sordid enough. Independence had provided an opportunity of promoting indigenous Kashmiri culture and ethos without any obstruction. What is more, an organization called J&K Academy of Art, Culture and Languages was incepted with adequate funds available to it. Ambivalent elements within the so-called nationalist political framework in Kashmir sensitized some half-baked Kashmiri literary scientists to jingoism. Under the tutorship of the Academy of Culture, these half-baked scholars sat together to invent out of the Urdu script a 'standardized' Kashmiri script in Arabic letters without any scientific and technical input from any expert or institution. I have myself been an amusing spectator of their sprawling ignorance. The only principle they kept in sight was never to talk about Sharada script. It was almost something sacrilege to talk of the Pandit tradition, which, of course, was the tradition of their distant ancestors as well. What they produced is a baggage of foolhardiness and ridiculous claim to scholarship. The script they publicized is one in which you can neither consistently write nor can you read it out once you have written something. For last fifty years and more, the governments in the state, the Cultural Academy, cultural organizations and individuals, one and all made a deliberate and concerted effort to ensure that Sharada script was not revived and Roman script was not introduced. Urdu script was given almost something like religious sanctity and it came to be recognized as the essential symbol of 'Kashmiriyat'. In this way, the path of progress of language and literature was stonewalled, and the people of Kashmir were put on a wrong track that would lead them nowhere. Now with the exodus of Pandits, the looming threat that some day Sharada might be revived as the script for Kashmiri has totally disappeared. As such, the Pandits may not be much concerned with what the people of the valley are going to do with their indigenous traditions including the script. All that one can say is that they will continue to cater to their short-sighted and prejudicial approach to a social and cultural theme of extraordinary importance. However, what relates to the internally displaced Pandits from Kashmir is how they are going to react to this question now that they have comparatively good deal of independence in pursuing their cultural traditions. This is precisely the theme of this article.

As we speak about the Pandits and their indigenous traditions, we must not forget that this is a very small and dispersed community in exile for last fourteen years. Dispersal is always a big threat to the perpetuation of indigenous traditions and cultures. In

particular when this indigenous community has the compulsion to exist in a vast society of Indian nation in which she has no political locus standi at the moment, her very identity and individuality remain severely threatened. In this scenario, the primary question is whether this unfortunate community, the victim of historical suppression and repression, will be able to retain its identity in part or in full? That its existence and identity are at stake in a secular democratic India is indeed the stupendous irony of fate. Therefore sometimes I think that talking of script, language, traditions and things like that seems nothing short of superfluity. Is there any sense if we waste our energies in discussing these matters as we find them gradually vanishing with the passing of each day. Our children in exile speak all the local languages except their original mother tongue. They need a language that brings them closer to the environs and social milieu surrounding them. They need a language that will open the doors of livelihood upon them. Kashmiri language is least qualified to address these imperatives. Therefore those who are fanatically committed to a search for a scientific script for Kashmiri should not overlook these harsh realities on the ground. Now supposing that we have to develop a script in any case for Kashmir either for the preservation of our cultural fund or for prompting our futuristic aspirations for cultural advancement, then, in my opinion the time is ripe that we come out of emotions and sentiments and begin thinking like cool and considerate scientists. In a bid to evolve a new script that will encompass all peculiar full and broken vowel sounds of Kashmiri language or deformed and corrupted pronunciation of Sanskrit vocabulary, we should first of all try to learn something from the experience of other nations and communities.



Introspection

Let Us Take The Responsibility Of Our Actions

... **M. L. Kher**



After India got independence, Kashmiri Pandit community suffered enormously and lived as unwanted second class citizens in Kashmir. Let us introspect and take some responsibility for this, ourselves.

One of the most unfortunate and painful thing in our community is that we are disunited and hesitate to confess our mistakes and actions done by us and by our so called leaders, both in pre-independence and post-independence periods. We are equally reluctant to express regret and try to make amendments or even simply render a heart felt apology. On the contrary we glorify and justify our actions. An unforgiving, unrepentant nature – whether among individuals, families, communities or nations – is responsible for misunderstanding that leads to unity and selfishness. This applies to our leaderless and rudderless community at present in distress.

We all need to examine our inside where we have gone wrong. For it is almost impossible to change ourselves. If we all decide to do that and rise to the occasion here and now, there will be no need to change anybody else anyway. Another thing that we need to change is our negative attitude to life which leads to anger, jealousy, egoitism and to frustration. A positive attitude will make us grow. We will be able to achieve our goals making our community a better one to live with harmony and unity in the near future.

Unfortunately Kashmiri Pandit Community has been disinherited by the conquerers from time to time. This has fed us to adopt escapiest attitude which is reflected in our social behaviour and a defeated complex in our psyche. The community at the present in exile is required to investigate and reject the selfish and negative approach and find the practical solutions for the future survival with full determination, will and vision.

We have to admit that vast majority of our community after migration are relatively at safe stations, major portions belonging to rural areas continue to be living in tents and rented houses. Bvut we cannot forget that there are still people in our community though in less number now, scattered in the valley who are braving the barbarities at great risk due to their own compulsions. Yet, we cannot ignore the fact that our progeny are

fortunate to be part of the world of opportunities in our country in India and in the wide world where they will not have to face discrimination. We have to think coolly and unitedly about the future of our community. With the material progress we have to think about our spiritual and moral values which we are ignoring by adopting Western style of life leading to extravagancy and alcoholism which will make our community lop-sided in future. 🙄🙄

From Kolkata Holocaust Day

... **Dr. B.K.Moza**



Kashmir Sabha, Calcutta, is a social organisation of Kashmiri Pandits in Kolkata, affiliated to All India Kashmiri Samaj, Delhi (A.I.K.S.). Kashmiri Pandits are observing 20th January as the Holocaust Day in remembrance and reverence of those precious lives lost due to fundamentalist terrorism in Kashmir, in 1989-90 and thereafter, resulting in their internal displacement and diaspora outside their homeland. On this day in 1990, Kashmiri Pandits had to leave, under desperate circumstances, their hearths and homes in Kashmir, en masse, as the soft targets of a planned genocide let loose by the Islamist terrorists against this Hindu minority in Kashmir valley.

Though fourteen long years have passed, this hapless community stands up-rooted from their hearths and homes in their homeland of recorded history of more than five thousand years. They represent an infinitesimally small community and have been ignored both by the State and Central Governments as they do not represent a vote bank. They are the original inhabitants of Kashmir, the current year being the 5079 year of their original Saptrishi Calender. They are a peaceful and non-violent community, well known for their literary, intellectual and creative excellence. Historic invasions on Kashmir, mass murders, conversions and consequent migrations reduced them to a minority in Kashmir. Their fault, as considered by the terrorists, is, that they are the stooges of Bharat; their merit and no nuisance values and small numbers, as a minority, have made them victims of discrimination under prevailing conditions. All this has resulted in the ethnic cleansing, upheaval and diaspora of this small minority of Kashmir. About a thousand murders, including those of some veteran stalwarts of the community, arson of their houses, massacre of temples, rape, coercion and threats, under the glare of loud speakers in mosques and road side demonstrations, about their survival, safety and honour to their womenfolk led to the sudden mass exodus and displacement of this minority community of Kashmir. More than three lakh displaced persons are still passing their days in dilapidated shelters and inhuman conditions in camps in Jammu, Udampur and Delhi. Their cultural identity and rich heritage is severely threatened. Already disease, depression and environmental hazards have inflicted a heavy toll on these displaced people whose numbers have further shrunk on account of their living conditions.

While paying homage, to those who sacrificed their lives, and providing solidarity to the cause of this suffering minority in exile, Kashmir Sabha, Calcutta, appeals to the great institutions of "free press" and media of this country, on this holocaust observance day, to

inquire into the sufferings of this distressed minority and to do the needful in providing them the required healing touch. This has remained of no concern to the authorities in power for this minority group does not represent a vote bank. It is a healthy development that dialogues on Kashmir are taking place between Governments of India and Pakistan and internally with the various Kashmiri political outfits of militant and otherwise origins. But it is unfortunate and unbecoming that Kashmiri Hindu minority is totally ignored and taken for granted in this process. Kashmir Sabha, Calcutta raises its voice, in conjunction with other affiliates of AIKS, and seeks justice in respect of the following:

- 1). Provision of Internally Displaced People status to Kashmiri Pandits in exile, as per the guidelines of United Nations.
- 2). To rehabilitate the up-rooted Kashmiri Pandits with security, safety and honour in Kashmir and safeguard their return by ensuring them their rights as " Reverse Minority " as per statutes of Human Rights Institutions. Kashmir has been provided a special status, under Section 370, in Indian constitution because in Kashmir valley the inhabitants are largely Muslim, which is a minority community in total Indian context. In fitness to this constitutional guarantee, Kashmiri Pandits should also be provided a reverse minority status in that state by the State constitution.
- 3). Kashmiri Pandits should find their rightful place in the negotiations to settle Kashmir issue in general and in special as a Kashmiri minority group for achieving their permanent and honourable return to their homeland, Kashmir. In this respect their apex body, AIKS, should be invited as the representative of this internally displaced minority group of Kashmiris in all negotiations for accomplishing settlement of Kashmir issue and for their rehabilitation in Kashmir.

In conclusion, Hindus and Muslims have lived, with harmony and peace and with reputable tolerance and respect for each other's religious faiths in Kashmir. Kashmiri Pandits have been the glorious icons in the history of Kashmir, very essential nuts and bolts of freedom movement in Kashmir and India and as great pillars of Indian civilisation all through. The cross border terrorism and influence of fundamentalist trends have thrust a severe blow to peaceful inheritance of Kashmiri brotherhood and its glory. This has caused the discrimination, genocide and bloodshed. The result has been the displacement and mass exodus of Kashmiri minorities from this state and their breach of trust with the majority community. On this Holocaust Day, Kashmiri Pandits ensure their commitment to restoration of this trust and to the processes of their honourable return to their homeland, reconstructing its future and restoring its glory in the fast developing Indian scenario.

With this in view the vibrant cooperation, of the electronic Media and Press, is solicited for reaching and highlighting this appeal to the corridors of power , wherever these are.



Stories for the children

Three Questions — CONCLUDING PART

... M. K. Raina



Ananta requested the Tantrik to stay for the night, so that they could leave together for Arunagiri next morning, where he would pay him his fee. "How and wherefrom are you going to pay me," asked the Tantrik. Ananta was silent. He could not reveal the facts. The Tantrik got suspicious. He shut his eyes and meditated. After a while, he opened his eyes and fell at Ananta's feet. Anusuya looked puzzled. He did not know what was going on. The Tantrik disclosed that Ananta, was actually Rajkumar Arisudhana of Batsala. Both Anusuya and Pushpalata were stunned at the revelation. Tantrik said to Rajkumar Arisudhana, "I will not accept any fee from you. You are the son of the most noble king on earth. It was my guru Joginda, who performed *Tapasya* and *Yagna* to bring you into this world." Anusuya and Pushpalata touched Rajkumar Arisudhana's feet in reverence. Tantrik continued, "I will be pleased to send the message of your return to Maharaja Abhayadhiraj through my tantrik powers." After saying this, the Tantrik left.

Rajkumar Arisudhana left for his kingdom next morning. It was the last but one day of his five year limit. He was eager to reach Arunagiri. He took Anusuya, Pushpalata and their son along. They had to go a long way, first up to village Rudraloka and then rowing along the river Surbhi, to Arunagiri.

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Maharaja Abhayadhiraj was very perturbed, for, he had no news about Rajkumar. There was only one day left now for the five year term to end. Maharaja thought that his wish to crown his son as his successor, would probably not materialise. Maharani was very upset. She was longing to see her son, with or without answers. Both of them went to bed with a heavy heart.

Maharaja Abhayadhiraj saw Rajkumar Arisudhana in his dream, telling him that he would reach Arunagiri next morning. Maharaja woke up and told Maharani about the dream. Her joy knew no bounds. The Tantrik had done his duty of informing them about Rajkumar's return. Maharaja immediately called for the Mahamantri, Rajguru and others

and told them to make grand preparations for receiving Rajkumar Arisudhana at the Surbhi banks.

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On reaching Arunagiri in his boat, Ananta found Maharaja, Maharani, Mahamantri and all other dignitaries waiting impatiently at the bank of Surbhi, with garlands in their hands. There was a sea of people behind them. A specially decorated elephant was there to carry Rajkumar.

People shouted slogans with joy, "*Rajkumar Arisudhana Ki Ja!*". Maharaja and Maharani had tears of joy in their eyes. They embraced and garlanded their son. Others followed.

Rajkumar Arisudhana was seated on the elephant. Maharaja & Maharani got onto their royal carriage. Rajkumar had Anusuya, Pushpalata and their son seated on another carriage along with Mahamantri. They then set towards Rajmahal.

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Rajguru was waiting with flowers and *tilak* at the Palace Gate. He welcomed Rajkumar Arisudhana and applied *tilak* on his forehead. He escorted Rajkumar to Durbar Hall, where he was scheduled to answer the three questions in presence of all.

People had assembled in the courtyard of the Rajmahal. Rajkumar Arisudhana was given a royal bath and a royal robe before he took his seat in the Hall next to Maharaja Abhayadhiraj. Anusuya and his family also joined the Durbar. Maharaja asked his Mahamantri to proceed with the formalities. Mahamantri welcomed the public and then stated the purpose of holding Durbar. He requested Rajguru to pronounce the questions one by one to enable Rajkumar to answer them. There was pin-drop silence all around.

Rajguru pronounced the first question: 'What is that which a woman loves most?'

Rajkumar Arisudhana shut his eyes for a while. Then he looked at the blind Pushpalata and answered, "A woman loves her child the most."

Naturally. Rajkumar had changed his answer to this question. When Pushpalata donated her eyes, she knew very well that she would not be able to see the world thereafter. She also knew that her beauty, which she loved most and which she had restored by selling her house and the precious necklace, will mean nothing without eyes. Still she sacrificed everything for her child. This made it amply clear that her child was her ultimate love.

Rajguru pronounced the second question: 'In what lies one's lasting pleasure?'

Rajkumar answered: "One's lasting pleasure lies in one's contentment".

Mihira was not a bad man. Being ambitious is not sin. In fact ambitions lead to progress but one has to be contented with one's lot at a certain stage. Mihira had lost contentment. His ambition to be the wealthiest man turned him greedy and in the process, he lost everything.

Rajguru pronounced the third question: 'What is that which one can not hide for long?'

Rajkumar replied: "One's Roots".

Narsimha knew very well that his prediction could get him into trouble, but he could not resist telling a fact. The astrologer in him did not allow him to keep quiet. He was sure his prediction was based on authentic calculations and he was correct. So even at the cost of his life, he could not hide from the world, the facts, much less his roots.

Maharaja Abhayadhiraj directed his Mahamantri to bring him the amulet given by yogi Joginda. The amulet was opened. Maharaja and Rajguru checked the answers with those given by Rajkumar. Maharaja was highly delighted and so were others. Rajguru announced that the answers were correct. People shouted *jayjaykar* for Rajkumar Arisudhana.

Next day, as the Sun rose high in the sky, Rajkumar Arisudhana was crowned as the rightful successor to the throne of Batsala. There was illumination throughout Arunagiri. Rajkumar got Anusuya appointed as a *Mantri* in the Durbar, much to the delight of Pushpalata, who enjoyed the function through the eyes of her son. In the midst of public, Maharaja Abhayadhiraj spotted an old man, who was watching the proceedings calmly. It was yogi Joginda. Maharaja, without caring for the royal protocol, went personally up to him and embraced him. He brought him to the ceremonial dais where he was welcomed with garlands. Maharaja introduced him to Rajkumar Arisudhana. Rajkumar touched his feet. Joginda was all praise for the prince. He blessed him and prayed for his long life. Maharaja gifted him a pearl necklace.

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There was one question which still bothered Rajkumar Arisudhana. Did he not commit a sin by not revealing his identity to Guru Vasudeva? He had thought to put this question to Rajguru, but since yogi Joginda was present in the Rajmahal, he deemed it proper to put the question to him only.

Next day, after narrating the whole story of Guru Vasudeva and Narsimha to yogi Joginda, Rajkumar put the question to him. Joginda replied, "No. You have not committed any sin. You were asked to remain in the garb of an ordinary person and not to reveal your identity, while seeking the answers. You have merely complied with that condition. Moreover you did not hide your identity to cause any harm to anybody or to escape a punishment." Rajkumar Arisudhana was relieved to hear Joginda's reply and so were all others.

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Five years later, Maharaja Abhayadhiraj and Maharani Vasundhara decided to relinquish the throne in favour of their son. So Rajkumar Arisudhana became the king of Batsala at the young age of twenty-five. At the age of thirty, he extended his rule to other regions which included Rudraloka, Chandri, and Saraspur. He treated all his subjects with love and care and provided them a justly rule. People were also proud of him.

And Maharaja Arisudhana came to be known for his wisdom and justice throughout Bharatvarsha. Anusuya, who was appointed his Mahamantri, proved his credentials by his wise counselling and guidance to the king all through his life.

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National Schools of Kashmir
An Institution with a Mission - 3
... J.N.Kachroo



Change of Guard:

ate D.N.Raina had a short tenure of just over a year as the Principal. The time was well utilized as a transition. I stepped into his shoes in 1970. Shri J.N.Patwari, my colleague for nearly three decades was promoted as headmaster. These changes ensured continuity of the spirit of the school motto and traditions. Late L.K.Rambal, Principal, College of Education and Prof. Dr. Susheela Bhan were coopted as members of the Managing Committee.

From day one, the challenging goal of modernising the school was relentlessly pursued with predetermined priorities.

Staff: Without violating the spirit of Grant-in-Aid Rules, an attractive salary structure including a provision for pension in addition to usual retirement benefits, provision for sponsorship for in-service training, and induction of female teachers ensured recruitment of young talented staff. Shri Bashir Ahmed, who was on deputation from the government joined the school service on permanent basis after resigning his government job. The practice of hiring on contract retired teachers was restricted to exceptional cases in the interest of maintaining standards in certain disciplines. (Ref: Appendix Pt.1)

1969-70 was mostly spent in planning, selecting staff, improving infrastructure starting from the bottom and the top at the same time, preparing a well equipped Kindergarten class, and imparting intensive teaching in 9th and 10th class. Teaching of English was reinforced as a prelude to changing the medium of instructions to English in a phased manner. This was achieved in three years. The result justified the efforts. details are of academic interest. (Ref: Appendix Pt.2)

Co-curricular Activities: Believing in imparting education beyond the text books for an allround development, a blend of sports and literary programmes constituted a workable calender.

In spite of certain infrastructural shortcomings, games, sports summer camps, hikes, sports, especially races became regular features. Besides participating in inter-school events, the school had the distinction of representing the state at many national levels. (Ref: Appendix Pt.3)

Annual symposiums, debates, elocution contests, quiz and essay writing competitions, cultural meets, musical programmes and mock Parliaments formed an integral part of the 'School Action Plans'. Invariably the subjects or themes of each of these activities were topical intended to educate the students and increase the awareness of the parents, who formed the bulk of the audience at the presentation occasions. These public functions were chaired by VIPs, intellectuals, academicians adding credibility to the efforts. (Ref: Appendix Pt.4)

Enrolment: Close rapport with parents, completion of 'Annual Action Plans', vibrant activities of students and good results at the matriculation exams, revived the popularity of the school. It became co-educational. Roll of the school rose to over 1700 in 1982 against less than 800 in 1969. It catered to the less privileged and weaker sections in particular.

Finances: With increase in roll and certain amendments in Grant-in-Aid Rules, the situation was eased. But certain illogical provisions hampered growth. A struggle to get the rules modified gave birth to 'Kashmir Aided Schools Association', with late D.N.Nadim as President and J.L.Taimiri as V.President. I was elected its Secretary. The Association met with little success till late S.M.Abdullah came to power in 1975.

S.M.Abdullah's Patronage: A two hour impromptu meeting with late Shaikh Sahib in January 1974 at Delhi proved very propitious for the aided educational institutions in general and National School in particular. J.N.Patwari, V.P.Gurtoo and late J.L.Dhar were with me. Soon after he assumed power in 1975, an 'Advisory Committee on Aided Education' with four non-official members headed by the Finance Minister D.D.Thakur was constituted. Late S.K.kaul and I were nominated as members. The other two never attended any meetings. This Committee got the rules rationalised. It proved a saviour of small schools and defendant of honest ones.

National School used to hold a symposium on the life and works (or related topics of late J.L.Nehru on 27 May every year. Sheikh Sahib condescended to preside over this function on 27 May 1974. Starting from that day, he regularly graced one or the other function every year. On his advice, National School would hold its Annual Day on 2nd October to synchronise it with Gandhi Jayanti. He presided over it almost regularly.

A Catastrophe: In late 1970's, the school building was crying for repairs. But the landlords were trying to rope in a powerful party to convert it into a commercial complex. The school could not be ousted without government support. The C.M., late Sheikh Sahib did not favour the idea. Instead he advised the School for a settlement, assuring government aid.

Negotiations, swinging between outright purchase and effecting repairs with revision of rent, belied any conclusion for over two years. Hardly a month after the passing away of Sheikh Sahib, the school building was destroyed in a fire in the wee hours of 7th October 1982. The C.M., Dr. Farooq Abdullah visited the site within hours and assured help for rehabilitation.

Before noon of the same day, the school management was served an injunction forbidding change of status-quo. A legal fight ensued which reached the apex court more than once.

The police investigating agency picked some important persons for questioning. However, the scene changed fast. The investigating agency instead of solving the mystery of fire, kept the school staff on tenterhooks. The C.M's enthusiasm to help the school waned. The school was advised to shift to the outskirts of the city. The stalemate continued for nearly four years. The story is painful, but illustrative of how public interests can be got trampled.

The school continued to function in shifts. The classes were held in ramshakled rooms in the ground floor of the burnt building, in tents and a make-shift barrack made on a 16 feet wide road leased by the Municipality a few years earlier.

Resurrection: The impasse was broken by the G.M.Shah government which acquired the property under Land Acquisition Act and transferred it to the school on payment of 50 % compensation. The other 50 % was paid by the government as Grant-in-Aid. This was also challenged in the Hon'ble Supreme Court which did not agree to any plea to oust the school from a building specially designed and built for the school. Also the court upheld the validity of the acquisition. However, the plaintiff's lawyer withdrew the case before the Hon'ble Court could record a judgement. The building was finally handed over to the school on 15th May 1986. The building was rebuilt and roofed by October 1986. It seems that the school has yet to claim building grant under rules.

APPENDIX

National School, Srinagar - Recollections 1969-1986

1. Staff 1980: With one M.A.B.Ed. at the top, the School had 25% trained post graduates;
2. 50% trained graduates and 25% other special line teachers.
3. Results after 10 years of change: Pass percentage in 1980 was 95, in 1981, it was 88 and in

4. 1982, it was 92. 40% of the successful candidates were placed in 1st Division. The School figured in the State Merit List (first 20 ranks) every year, capturing 30 places or 10.7% of places from 1969-1981. Figures of 1982-86 not available. In 1973 (Nov), the School captured 1st (Pankaj Koul), 11th (Ravinder Wattal) and 14th (Surrinder Bhat) positions.
3. a) The School represented the State at national level 3 times at R.C., two times at Camps organised by the Central agencies at Delhi.
b) Presented Iqbal Night, Lalded Night, Kashmiri Folk Music at Tagore Hall.

4. **The following graced the School during the period:**

Swami Ranganathananda (R.K.Mission), L.K.Jha (Governor), Mekhala Jha, Syed Mir Qasim, Sheikh Abdullah, Dr. Farooq Abdullah, Mirza Afzal Beg, Begum Abdullah, D.D.Thakur, M.K.Tiku, P.L.Handoo, Mohd. Shafi, Prof. Rais Ahmed (VC, Kashmir University), Dr. Agha Ashraf, M.S.Pandit, S.L.Pandita, Prof. A.A.Suroor.

M.C. during the crisis: J.N.Bhan, S.K.Kaul, G.A.Burza, M.K.Kllam, Prof. J.K.Pandita, Dr. K.N.Pandita, J.N.Patwari, Qazi A.Rashid, Bashir Ahmed and J.N.Kachroo.

5. **They brought honour to themselves and to the School:**

a) **[Pre-1969 .. in continuation]** S.N.Kaul, M.L.Seeru (C.Es), Prof. Dr. A.K.Raina (DU),

b) Prof. Dr. M.K.Teng, Dr. M.L.Peshin, Dr. C.L.Peshin, Dr. R.L.Kaul, Dr. Mohd. Yousuf,

Prof. P.N.Kak (Physics), Prof. M.L.Raina (English), G.L.Sumbly.

Makhan Lal Dhar - A businessman, now the President of the School.

Business: Mohd. Yousuf Beigh, Mohd. Amin, Gh. Hassan Beigh, A.K.Kaul, Nazir Ahmed.

c) **Post 1969:** Ashok Sultan (BE IIT, C-T ITI) Chittranjan Kaul (BE, MBA IIM), Kuldeep

d) Peshin (CPWD), Dr. Anil Karihalloo (Scientist USA), Anil Zutshi (Eng - USA),

Dr. Pankaj Kaul (UK), Dr. Ravinder Wattal (Mumbai), Rajeev Khashu (Siemens), Sanjeev Khashu (Eng - USA) Dr. Pradeep Mattoo.

(Most of the above under 5 contacted)

School in Financial Distress!

Can such a distinguished institution which has rendered meritorious service, Starve, much less Perish.

Its assets: Thousands of its students across the globe.

Contact: J.N.Kachroo, 4-B/202, Whispering Palms, Lokhandwala, Kandivli (E),
Mumbai 400101. **Tel:** 28865853. **E-Mail:** kachroofam@yahoo.co.uk

Spirituality & Religion
Inner Strength
... **Dr. J.P.N.Trakru**



Man is born with a blue print from the past as a carry forward of all his deeds or misdeeds. With a new environment and a fresh opportunity provided he can try once again to mend his ways or plug in the pot holes, which he mined on his last sojourn. If you are lucky enough to come across a divine Guru, as a guide to light your path, think yourself blessed. The inverting darkness of ignorance that discriminated you from the light house of your Atma, that was your birth right, can be spiritually lifted with the loving benevolent father once again beckons you into 'His' fold.

The simplicity of Siddha path is open to one and all to heal us in Body, Mind and Soul in order to reverse the process from where we stand today. No prerequisites are required except the will to be healed. When faith in your own stamina is lost, it has an easier inflow towards another way of life, not hard to tour. Avdhoot Baba Shivananda's (He is belongs to the Siddha lineage initiated by Bhagwan Nityananda) approach is so unbelievably simple that it is hard to believe the results till they actually show up. With simple chanting of god's name, that is proclaimed as beneficial by every religion, Baba takes you to inaccessible dimensions. In fact, he does it all single handedly on the strength of his own Sadhana, what he transfers to us is sheer grace, a divine blessing and a benediction.

Chanting :

Most unobtrusively, revered Baba asks the audience to just sit with their eyes shut, and he undertakes to do the rest himself. With this one singular gesture which seems the easiest for any seeker to fulfill, he achieves tremendously. The total misleading by the eyes that has become the gateway of perception to all the senses of the body potential are immediately given the "shutters down" order to disconnect with the entire outside panorama at one stroke! The reversed sight or the insight is immediately switched on to the internal hemisphere on its first step towards unbounded infinity. There one contacts the essential ingredients of the human frame viz. the basic breath rhythm, the seven

Chakras through which all outer stimuli makes an entry and the mind ego connection that separates us from the substratum-the Atma. Exploring within the higher domains through meditation seems to take one directly to the path of self-realization or the realization of what the self looks like today and what it can become after the cleansing process.

Value of Chanting :

Each body cell has its own frequency. With each movement, there is vibration and sound. To create harmony they have to move in unison. Whenever, rhythm or harmony is disrupted there will be disease and disorder. One of the pivotal practices of Siddha marg is chanting. Congregational chanting has a most significant effect on the body and mind and due to the vibrating energy that it produces. Human cells respond to pure vibrations born of mantras of the Holy name and thus internal harmony is restored. Of all healing sounds that are the most potent, are redeeming names of God that have transforming powers to purify and lift one to a higher state of awareness. Its importance lies in making it the centrifugal force of life. Chants calm, clear and help the mind to rejuvenate beyond compare. Each word uttered leaves a subtle impression, erasing by its positivity the previous negative imprints. The pure syllables of the names of God are a powerful breakthrough into the mass of irrelevant thought process. They open up the higher state of awareness, bringing in clearer perception of us. Bathing in these purifying sounds opens up our heart, especially when we invoke 'His' presence and consequently we feel uplifted. Then our most stubborn and inborn faults are dissolved and annihilated.

Many of us visit the Babulnath temple. What do we find there? Yes! there is a Shiva ling with a snake coiled up around him in three and a half circles. Above this idol of Shiva ling and snake, housed over a stand with three legs is an earthen pot filled with water. There is a hole in this pot from where water is dripping down below. That's how we offer water to Shiva as a mark of obeisance. In exactly the same manner there is a ling in the Muldhara Chakra of every human being. Kundalini Shakti-the serpent power-is coiled around Muldhara Chakra exactly in three and a half circles. Kundalini in Muldhara Chakra is in dormant form. From Sahastrasar Chakra, elixir drips down on the shivaling drop by drop. The tripod like contraption in Shivaling is comparable to the three nadis i.e. Ida, Pingla and Sushana.

Ida and Pingla represent the force of the Moon and Sun respectively. This is a beautiful symbolic description of Shiva. It has been said that man is a replica of God. Our Siddhas have imparted this sacred knowledge in our Vedas, Puranas, Upnishads and other holy scriptures.

Shivpanchakshri Mantra 'Namah Shivaya' :

This mantra is drawn from the five elements of nature namely, Earth, Sky, Water, Air and Fire. This mantra is capable of cleansing up all these elements. Seed of this bija mantra has all the characteristics of its parent body. Shiva panchakshari mantra is evolved from the

five seeds of aforesaid natural elements (Namah Shivaya) NA- consecrates Prithvi Tatva. Ma- Jal Tatva, Shi- energizes Agni Tatva, VA- Energizes Vayu Tatva and finally YA- Energizes Akash Tatva. 'OM' purifies Brahma Tatva and crown Chakra.

• • • • •

सौंतुच गाह त्राव

... डा. बी. के. मोज़ा, कोलकाटा

सौंतुच गाह त्राव यारि जानानो
पोशे बागन वुज़नाव च्युय ।
सोज़ुच लय खार दिलि जानानो
मनुचन तारन अलुनाव च्युय ॥

शिठ्यमुत्य् छि पॅश तय पंछी यारो
लॅग्यमुत्य् छि कोह तय बालो हो ।
कुमलाव वॅकन्य् हिश शीनय मान्यो
होखिमुत्य् नालय ग्रज़नाव च्युय ॥

जामु रॅस्य् वॉरान कुल्य् वॅक्य् यारो
मंदछान पनुने हालो हो ।
पोशाक पॉरुख सब्जे बहारो
स्वंदर मालन स्वंदराव च्युय ॥

नालान बुलबुल वंदु के हालो
त्रावान अशुने दारो लो ।
आरु हॅत्य् नालु बोज़ुस मदन वारो
अडु फुट्य् बामन फवलनाव च्युय ॥

नासाज़ छु कॅहरे द्यद तय लालो
वंदु किन्य् दुरु पॅक्य् बेगानो ।
जुव अन ज़ीवन बादे बहारो
यावन वीर्यन वुज़नाव च्युय ॥

बौबुर छु फेरान बडि आशायो
छांडान वॅक्य् वॅक्य् यॅम्बुर हो ।
आशा स्व पूर कर बडि दयावानो
मनु क्यन अबिलाशन पुरनाव च्युय ॥

रूशिथ छि गॉमुच्च महफिल यारो
तूशिथ कति तान्म्य् म्य् प्यालो हो ।
बॅर्य बर्य चावनाव प्रेमुक्य् प्यालो
दगि रोस्त दादचन बलनाव च्युय ॥

नव बहारो कोतू गोख

... डा. बी. के. मोज़ा, कोलकाटा

चानि आशायि योर आये, नव बहारो कोतू गोख ।
वारि साने पोश ज़ाये, सब्जारो कोतू गोख ॥

रोशि चाने गोश फोलुयो, जायि जाये चॉन्म्य् माय ।
वुज़ुनॉविथ, व्वसिनॉविथ, दिल बहारो कोतू गोख ॥

डालि जॅरिथो पोशि फुलयव, ऑल्य् बॅरिथो शोकु सान ।
वुफ हेछिथुय दूर गोखो, पोशिनूलो कोतू गोख ॥

ग्रज़ुनॉविथ जरनु बॅरिथो, ज़िंदु कॅरिथो जंगलाथ ।
सोज़ बॅरिथुय आबुशारो, साज़गरो कोतू गोख ॥

ललुनॉविथ फवलुनॉविथ, बाशि अनिथो बेयि शबाब ।
क्याज़ि गोखो कमि दोखो, माजि लोलो कोतू गोख ॥

नॉग्युरायो गगुरायो, यीच्च जलदी ऑस क्याह ।
रुज़िज़ेह बेयि कॅह कालो, ल्वकुचारो कोतू गोख ॥

सीर चॉनिय कॅह न ज़ानव, ह्यनु ऑमुत्य् ज़लुर्य ज़ालु ।
पाँदु कॅरिथुय काँद कॅरिथो, पॅहरुदारो कोतू गोख ॥

चॉन्म्य् खेला लाजवाबो, चॉन्म्य् लीला बेमिसाल ।
चूनि जरयो चानि छाये, म्वखतु हारो कोतू गोख ॥

ललु वाख

स्वयि कुल नो द्वु सुत्य सॅगिजे, सर्पिनि ठूलन दिजि नो फाह ।
सेकि शाठस फल नो वॅविजे, रावरिजि नो कोम्य याजन तील ॥

मूडस ज्ञानुच कथ नो वॅनिजे, खरस गोर दिनु राविय द्वह ।
युस युथ करिय सु त्युथ स्वरे, क्रेरे कॅरिजि नु पनुनुय पान ॥

Children's Page



Increase your Knowledge: **Photosynthesis**

Plants obtain their energy directly from sunlight, using a substance called chlorophyll to capture the energy. Chlorophyll is bright green and it is packed away inside leaves. When sunlight shines on a leaf, chlorophyll soaks it up and then passes on the energy, so that it can be used to combine water and carbon dioxide to make glucose (oxygen is produced as a by-product and is released through the leaves).

Plants use glucose as a fuel and they can also turn it into hundreds of other substances, including sticky sugars, floury starch and building materials that make some kinds of wood such as ebony and greenheart almost as hard as metal. Over many years, some plants grow 140 meters tall and end up weighing more than 1000 tonnes - thanks to energy collected from the Sun.

Animals cannot carry out photosynthesis, but they depend on it for survival. This is because photosynthesis allows plants to grow to become food for plant eating animals, which in turn are food for hunters. Without photosynthesis, the food chain would break down.

Report & Biradari News

Heritage Lottery Fund

Britain's Heritage Lottery fund has sanctioned aid of £45,000.00 to Kashmir Bhawan Centre, Luton to start a website on Sir Aurel Stein manuscripts pertaining to Kashmir, which are available in Oxford University's Bodleian Library. The Deputy High Commissioner of India officially launched the project at the India House on 17th December 2003. A number of representatives of press, media and distinguished scholars and members of Kashmir Bhawan Centre were present. The Deputy High Commissioner gave a detailed account of works executed by Sir Aurel Stein who was an Indologist, Archeologist, Geographer and Translator.

During the coming years, Kashmir Bhawan Centre in Luton will help Shri S.N.Pandita an Indian scholar and grand son of Shri Nityanand Shastri who assisted Shri Aurel Stein in translating Kalhana's Rajtarangini and Hatim's tales and Dr. Evison, Chief Librarian of Bodleian Library to jointly work on the Kashmir manuscripts collection available in the library. There are 300 manuscripts considered precious Treasures of Kashmir history, language and literature which bear remarkable stamp of oriental legacy.

Felicitated :

Dr. Motilal Anand Vaishnavi of Health Care Delivery Systems, International Technology Resc. Centre, Civil Hospital, Gandhinagar, Gujarat was felicitated at the Annual Ceremony of India International Friendship Society, New Delhi. The ceremony was held at the Hotel Holiday, Juhu, Mumbai on 11th November 2003, where a Seminar on 'Economic Growth & National Integration' was held along with the presentation of awards. Shri Vaishnavi was honoured with the India's most coveted Institutional and globally reputed Presentation of 'Bharat Jyoti Award' along with a 'Certificate of Excellence'.

Shri Vaishnavi is a life member of Kashmiri Pandits' Association, Mumbai.

Annual Hawan: This year, the Annual Hawan was performed at Kashyap Bhawan, Bhawani Nagar, Andheri. Hawan started at 3.00 PM on 7th February. Puran Ahuti was offered at 2.00 PM on 8th February. About a thousand biradari members partook Naveed on the occasion.

Milchar Editorial Board:

Shri J.L.Manwati has been appointed as Associate Editor of Milchar. The decision was taken in a meeting of the Board of Trustees of Kashmiri Pandits' Association, Mumbai on 25th January 2004.

'tsók módúr' released:

This book of short stories in Kashmiri by Shri M.K.Raina, a member of the Board of Trustees of KPA and Co-editor, Milchar, was released in a function held at Kashyap Bhawan, on 26th January 2004. The book was released by Shri J.N.Kachroo, Ex.

Principal, National High School, Srinagar and a founding member of the Project Zaan. It is worth mentioning that the stories are written in Standardised Devanagari Kashmiri Script side by side with the Indo-Roman Script, the first attempt of its kind, for benefit of the readers.

Akruti Kashmiri Software:

The Cyberscape Multimedia Limited, under a package arrangement with Shri M.K.Raina, have released Akruti Kashmiri Software, the modified version of their Akruti Devanagari Software. This software is upgraded with the inclusion of three new diacritical marks of the Kashmiri Script as approved by the Standardisation Committee headed by Dr. Roop K. Bhat of Northern Regional Languages Centre.

It may be mentioned that another Kashmiri Software namely 'Arinimal', is already available free of cost from Shri Sandeep Bhat of Penfosys, Pune, the developer of the software.

AIKS Delegation meets Frank Pallone Jr.

A delegation of All India Kashmiri Samaj (AIKS) led by its President Mr. M.K.Kaw met Frank Pallone Jr., Chairperson of Kashmir Task Force of the India caucus, in New Delhi on 11th January 2004 and discussed the emerging situation in Kashmir particularly after the successful India Pakistan summit and the SAARC declaration on terrorism and SAFTA. The delegation represented all affiliates and associates of AIKS. Amongst those who were part of delegation included Mr Sunil Shakhder, Vice President AIKS and President, Kashmiri Samiti Delhi (KSD); Mr H.N.Jattu, Vice President AIKS and President, All India Kashmiri Pandit Conference (AIKPC); Mr. M.L.Kaul General Secretary AIKS; Mr. Shiban Dudha, Treasurer and Political Advisor, AIKS; Dr. M.L.Hashia, Vice President Kashmir Sewak Samaj, (KSS) and Dr. B.L.Khachroo, President Kashmiri Pandits United Forum (KPUF).

At the outset the president Mr Kaw expressed gratitude on behalf of the community in exile for the uninhibited support from the US Congressman in the International fora for espousing the cause of internally displaced community. The delegation emphasized that the Pandits are against any division of Kashmir and they were having feelers from different shades of opinion in Kashmir, including mainstream political parties and those who have a difference of opinion to initiate a dialogue on their return and political rehabilitation with honour and dignity.

The plight of Pandits still living in Kashmir valley was also discussed with Mr. Pallone. He was given a first hand account of their miseries which had compounded due to continuous indifference shown by the state and central Governments. Mr. Pallone was all support for AIKS stand on Kashmir.

Frank Pallone, Jr. is known for his great love and respect for India. Very few know that he has also championed the cause of other suffering people around the globe, be they native American tribes in the U.S.A. or victims of genocide such as Armenians and

Kashmiri Pandits, or those who died in the Bhopal Gas Tragedy.

Congressman Pallone was the inspiration behind the creation of the India Caucus in the U.S. Congress in 1993 and served as its Co-chairperson until 1998. While his personal passions include environment and health care, he has long campaigned for granting a permanent security council seat for India, closer military ties between Israel, America and India, and continuation of rogue nation status for Pakistan on account of its various misdeeds.

Mr. Frank Pallone has not taken up the cause of Kashmiri Pandit community in exile only in US but has time and again vociferously presented the plight of this community with highest Indian authorities as well. In recognition of his relentless services to the Kashmiri Pandit Community in exile, he was honoured with a shawl and a memento. AIKS also acknowledged the contribution of Dr. Vijay. K.Sazawal of Indo American Kashmir Forum (IAKF) for his espousal of the cause of Kashmiri Pandits in exile at the higher levels of US administration.

(Input: AIKS)

News from Faridabad

vúshún athvàs: Under the auspices of KSS Faridabad, a congregation of the Kashmiri Pandit artistes living in the National Capital Region organised 'vúshún athvàs' at Sharika Bhawan, Faridabad. The artistes met in two sessions. Morning session started at 11.00 am and involved discussions about the present state of exiled Kashmiri Pandit artistes and the ways to establish them, as the Music, Theatre and other art forms of Kashmir can be saved by saving our artistes only. All the artistes present expressed their concern about their recorded numbers with Radio Kashmir Srinagar. The record of the credits of the artistes has been destroyed by the radio Kashmir authorities after the turmoil in 1990, so that no artiste can claim that these songs have been sung by him/her. The artistes vowed that they will do their best to re-record the number sung by them when they were in Kashmir.

The mindset of Kashmiri Pandit community regarding the artistes was also underlined by the artistes. They are specially invited (to sing) for the 'Mahendiraat'. The artistes pledged to change this mindset, so that they are not taken as mere marriage singers.

The evening session involved a cultural programme at Sharika Bhawan Auditorium, where many KP artistes participated and gave their performances. The artistes included Mrs. Archana Sopori, Abhishek Raina, Darshana Mehra, Dhananjay Kaul, Sanjeev Raina Gautam, Mrs. Sushma Kalla, Pulkit Premi, Satish Handoo, Subhash Handoo, Rohit Das, Sandeep Kaul, Usha Talashi and Dalip Langoo. Shri Roop Krishan Kaul accompanied the artistes on Tabla, Sunny Nayak on Dholak and Sonu on the Keyboard. Programme was compared by Shri Dileep Kumar Kaul.

At the end, the artistes presented a Memento to Shri J.N.Kaul Papaji to express gratitude for his encouragement. Shri Subhash spoke on behalf of the KSS Faridabad and thanked everybody for cooperation.

Navreh at Hari Parvat, Faridabad:

According to a message from Kashmiri Sewak Samaj, Faridabad, **Navreh**, will be celebrated on March, 21, 2004 at Hari Parvat, Anangpur, Faridabad, in a befitting manner with fervour and gaiety. The programme will include Satsang, discourse on Art of Living and exhibition of Sacred Relics of Pir Pandit Padshah Reshi Peer Sahib, besides Maha Yagna.

The Committee is making efforts to bring the 'RELICS' of Peer Pandit Padshah, RISHI PEER, to Hari Parvat, for the "Darshan" of the devotees. The "RELICS" will be accompanied by a group of immediate descendents of the great PEER Sahib.

Satguru Sri Sri RAVI SHANKER, the founder of the 'Art of Living' will also give a discourse. Ms. Chitra Roy, famous singer and party will lead Satsang. Distinguished Kashmiri Artists will present a two hour programme of Kashmiri Music.

Nuptials :

Tejasvi D/o Smt. Sarla & Shri M.K.Kachroo of Chembur was married to **Shailendra**, S/o Smt. Savita & Shri S.P.Bakshi of Delhi, at Delhi on 17th November 2003.

Alok, S/o Smt. Usha & Shri Ashok Tiku of Indra Darshan, Oshiwara married **Sumedha**, D/o Smt. Sarla & Shri Avtar Krishen Tikoo of Indore at Indore on 7th December 2003.

Sameer, S/o Smt Meena Wanchoo of Vile Parle, Mumbai was married to **Pritika**, D/o Smt. Rita and Dr. N.K.Shah at Kolkata on 19th January 2004.

Parag, S/o Smt. Asha Kaul of Gandhi Nagar, Bandra was married to **Sheetal**, D/o Smt. Asha & Shri Radha Krishen Tikoo of RNA Complex, Mira Road at Mumbai on 26th January 2004.

Shikha, D/o Mrs. Nirmala and Late Tej Kishen Tiku of Pune was married to **Prashant**, S/o Mrs. Pinky and Mr. Vijay Kumar Gupta at Mumbai on 31st January 2004.

Ashish, S/o Smt. Meena & Shri Ashok Dhar of Model Town, Mulund was married to **Anshi**, D/o Smt. Veena & Shri Tej Krishen Raina at Delhi on 31st January 2004.

Yegneopavit (Thread ceremony) performed :

Parag S/o Smt. Asha Kaul on 23 January 2004

Ashish S/o Smt. Meena & Shri Ashok Dhar on 26th January 2004.

Arvind S/o Shri Radha Krishen Tikoo on 23rd January 2004.

*Editor-in-Chief: P. N. Wali. Printed and Published by C.L.Raina for and on behalf of
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