PAANNYAAR

News & views of Kashmiri Pandits Living in Noida, NCR

For Private Circulation only

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April - June 2007

Sharing the moments of Paannyar: A gathering of Kashmiri Pandits in Noida on the eve of Navreh & Zung-Trui function-organised by a group of community activists including, Col Barsi Kaul, J. N. Fotedar, M. K. Kak, Kuldeep Dhar, Romesh Khosa, Dr. U. Kakreoo, Ramesh Manvati, Surjay Bhan, Kamal Hat, Col Revu, T. K. Bhat & Late Shri D. N. Kaul in the past. Some Pandit women can be seen carrying a packet of salt as a token of Zung in the photograph.

".... we are ONE ...."
**Upholding Our Traditions**

Glimpses of Gora-Trail (Guru Tritya) function organized by KMWA at the allotted piece of land in Noida on 21st of Jan '07. As per the tradition, Saraswati, the goddess of learning, popularly known as Sharda in the valley, was worshiped on this day. In earlier times, the family would used to paint Gora Trail and distribute the same among the children of his 'rajman'. The picture usually had a sketch of Saraswati in the centre surrounded by sketches of various creatures of nature. Tradition says that it was actually a convocation day when scholars would be awarded certificates of their having achieved the required degrees.

(Photocourtesy: Col Arun Seal, Sec-29)

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**Message**

Jagan Nath Kaol
President

We are proud of our community settled in Noida, who have been able to acquire 500 Sq meters piece of land at a prime location in Sector 34 in Noida. I feel very happy to see it and am looking forward to its location is very good. It holds great possibilities as a community project.

The community at Noida, as at many other places, has done an admirable job in acquiring a piece of land for building an institution for the services of the community. I am sure that the community center will come up well in time.

There are many dedicated workers both amongst elderly and youngsters, who are sincerely committed. And it is with the commitment of such persons and the support of the general public that we are able to make Institutions of social importance, wherever we go. Such institutions are institutions of strength for us.

The community has released the quarterly newsletter under the name “Paanmaar”. It is a good effort. I am fascinated by its name—“Paanmaar”. We need to have more and more of “Paanmaar”. That will make it richer.

The community center and the newsletter will create bonding to integrate and spread a sense of sharing and common concern and at the same time nurture social and cultural instincts that get relayed from generation to generation.

Good Institutions are one of the main signs of a community. And I hope we will together to raise strong institutions that will in turn give social strength to all of us.

With good wishes.

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**News Makers**

Yet another Padamshri to a Kashmiri Pandit.

Dr. Sudhir Sopori has been conferred the prestigious Padamshri award this year for his contributions in research and teaching in the field of Molecular Plant Physiology & Plant Biotechnology.

Born on 7th of January 1948, Prof. Sopori had his early education in Srinagar and obtained Ph.D degree from the University of Delhi. He joined JNU in 1975 where he became a Professor in 1988 and stayed there till 1997 before moving on as 'Group Leader' of Plant Molecular Biology Division at the 'International Centre' for 'Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology, N. Delhi. He has been a visiting scientist at the Max-Planck-Institute, Kolen and University of Munich, Germany; University of Texas, Austin and United State Department of Agriculture, Maryland, U.S.A.

Dr. Sopori has been conferred many awards earlier that also include the Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar Award (1987) and Birbal Sahni Centenary Gold Medal Award for Lifetime Achievements in Plant Sciences, 2005.

The earlier Padamshri awardees, within the community, include S/Sharbat Lal Saqai (Literature), Poshar Bhan and Soonath Nadi Sadhu (Broadcasting), T. N. Kaul (Public Service), J. N. Kaul-Papa Ji (Social Service), P. N. Kaul (Library Sciences), Pt. Bajran Sopori (Music), Anupam Kher (Acting) and D. Kaul (Medicine). Presently, Dr. Sopori lives in Faridabad.

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**Sivanta Beera - a Rising Star**

"It's 6 am in the morning and when the whole world is in deep slumber, a small kid of barely 4 years is busy hitting the ball in the basement of his house. The ball is tied to the ceiling, which his father has put up as a practice tool for him. Does this exercise religiously every day and not even a single day is missed out on this routine. He does not need any body to tell him at 5.30am to get up and start his daily routine, but it is.......page no. 1

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" Zameer Assi Dhimmay Wanni Zeer, Sammiy Saeree, Sammiy Saeree..."

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Kashmir's Contribution to Sanskrit Literature.... Contd from page no. 1

composed by Kashmiri scholars Jayadipa and Vamana about the 7th century AD. The Chinese traveller I-tsing noted its use by Chinese students of Sanskrit.

Kashmir also contributed some other seminal commentaries in Sanskrit literature. Take for example the Charaka Samhita, the earliest known work of Indian medicine. It now exists only in the revised version made by Dhuldhula in 8th century Kashmir. And the earliest existing work on the fine arts, after Bharata's Natya Shastra, is Kasibalanaka of Bhama, also from 8th century Kashmir.

These pioneering works have some idea of the age and importance of the Kashmir contribution to Sanskrit literature. On the whole, it can best be described under four broad categories: Historical works; Technical works; Philosophical or Religious works; and general literature, mainly poetry of different types.

We may start with historical works. The first name this brings to mind is of course the Rajatarangini of Kalhana. Written about 1150 AD, it is both a historical narrative and descriptive poetry of high quality. The first three of its eight books contain some important historical references, for example, Ashoka's patronage of Buddhism, the Kusana kings and the Huna invasion. But mainly they convey mythological information.

The remaining books cover about 500 years preceding Kalhana's own time. They provide a more factual record, an important source for the political, social and cultural history of Kashmir. Towards the end Kalhana mentions the aid sent from Kashmir to Afghan Shahi king Tribhuvanagha who was facing the invasion of Hamsara, identified by modern scholars with Mohmud Ghazni. However the history is more concerned with internal developments which are described vividly at length.

The famous Rajatarangini has overshadowed other historical works from Kashmir, both before and after it. Kalhana himself cites earlier historians like Keshmendra, Padmanabha and Chavilallaka, whose work is known but now lost. And after Kalhana there were three continuations of his history: by Jonraj who brought it forward by 300 years, including the introduction of Islam; by Srivara, who covered the reign of Sultan Zainal Abidin; and by Sukha who took it further up the Mughal annals of Kashmir.

Kashmiri scholars also wrote histories of areas other than their own. Bhithara, whose work was known to Kalhana, went to South India and joined the court of Chalukya king Vikramaditya in Kalyan in Karnataka, and wrote the history Vikramaditya Charita. A hundred years later Jayanaka came to Ajmer and Delhi and wrote the Prithvirajavivya, an account of the Chauhan dynasty up to Prithviraja's first victorious battle with the Ghoris. These works also point to the old tradition of learned Kashmiri in traveling to other parts of India in search of fortune and fame. Another such was Shihana, who is supposed to have composed his epigrammatic collection, Shanti Shatak in Bengal.

Turn now to technical works, first grammar. The two great grammarians of Sanskrit are Panini and Patanjali. The Kashmiri commentary on Panini has already been mentioned. Kashmir also contributed a famous commentary on the Mahabhashya of Patanjali. This is the Pradyota by the scholar Kayatya in the 12th century. According to legend, he was a poor man from the small town of Pampur or Yehgam, who eventually migrated to Benaras, where he wrote this commentary. About 400 years before him lived Chandragomin, who was a famous commentator of the Chandra Vyakarana grammar which was current in Kashmir and also in Tibet. However his provenance is uncertain.

The chief area of technical literature, where the Kashmiri contribution is predominant if not unique, is that of poetics, the study of literature as an art and of the criteria of its merit and defects. This Alankara Shastra has a vast corpus, and an abiding influence on literary tastes carried into the regional languages which grew out of Sanskrit.

The first name after Bharata in this area is Bhanaka, to whom reference has already been made. After him, it would seem that, with the exception of a few writers like Dandin, Bhaja and Rajasekharan, all the major exponents of Sanskrit poetics were from Kashmir. The list of these brilliant Acharyas includes celebrated names like Vamana and Udabhata in the late 8th century, Anandavardhana in the 9th, Rudrata in the 10th, Kurtakata and Kshemendra in the 11th and Mamnata in the 12th century AD. They are the progenitors of all the six major schools of poetics: Alamkara, Riti, Rasa, Divyasa, Vakroki and Ascharya. Anandavardhana's theory of Divyasa or suggestion perhaps had the most lasting effect on taste, especially after the commentary of Abhinavagupta, another Kashmiri Savant. It was further propagated by Mamnata in his Kayavyakasha, on which no less than 75 commentaries have been written subsequently in different parts of India, and which remains required reading for Sanskrit readers to this date.

In the field of religious and philosophical works, there is nothing from Kashmir to compare with the great Bhavishyas on Vedanta which emerged elsewhere, from Shankara in the 8th century Kerala to Baladeva in the 18th century Bengal. Once again, mention in this context a minor Vedanta writer, Keshava Kashai, whose work Vedanta Kaustubha Praabha supports the Devatadvaita system propagated by the Telugu saint-philosopher Nimbarka in the 13th century. More important in our context, however, are the thinkers who developed what is now known as Kashmir Shaivism. The chief name here is Vasugupta, to whom, according to legend, the Shivabha was revealed on Mount Mahendran in the Harvan valley. He was followed by Somananda, author of Shiva Drishti in the 11th century, and his disciple Utpaldeva, who wrote the well-known Ishwar-pratyabhijna. The idealistic monism of this philosophy has retained a following in Kashmir and elsewhere till present times. Also significant is devotional poetry from Kashmir in Sanskrit from Andavandhera's Devi-bhakta of the 9th century to Sahib Kaul's Devi-ravivalasa in the 17th century.

Finally, a brief word about general Sanskrit literature from Kashmir. This covers poetry, long and short, plays, epigrams and narrative works. Texts or extracts of these are still available, ranging over a thousand years from the 6th to 16th centuries AD. Here we have space for just a few names.

Among works from Kashmir, perhaps the most popular to this day is the Katha Sarit Sagara by Somdeva. The name means an ocean of streams of stories. These legends have it that they were recounted to entertain a queen of Kashmir. More venerable is the work Hayagrivavadhana by Mentha, dated to the 6th century. Kalhana says in his history that the king held it in such esteem that he had it kept on a plate of gold. No longer available, it is now known only through quotations. The other famous Kashmiri Kavyas are: Haravijaya by Ratnakara and Kapphina Abhyudaya by Shivasvamin, both of the 9th century; Ramanjyasa by Bhuta Bhima, which also illustrates the rules of Panini's grammar, apart from recounting Ravana's battle with the king Sahasrarna: and Shrikatha Charita by Manka from the 12th century, which also gives information about contemporary poets.

A unique work from Kashmir is the Kuttanapata by Damodaragupta, a novel in verse about the life of courtiers in the 9th century. A satire on the same theme is Samsayatraika by Keshamendra, who was perhaps the most prolific writer in Sanskrit we know from Kashmir. Apart from some sharp satires on the corruption and oppression of his times (10th-11th century), he also wrote important works on poetics and prosody, and verse reellings of the great epics, as also of the Buddhists-tejatas or birth-stories.

In conclusion one may mention two interesting works which reflect the cultural impact of the advent of Islam. One is the Kathakaika by Srivara, the historian of the reign of Zainal Abidin. This is a Sanskrit rendering of the Persian love story of Yousuf and Zulekha, except that it ends with a local twist when the lovers are reunited by the grace of great god Shiva. The other is Danelama Kathasara by Bhuta Bhima, about the love of a Muslim prince for a local courtesan.

This brief account will give a general overview of the pictures in which the Sanskrit literature revolved over centuries from Kashmir. With the subsequent switch over to Persian as the official language, and more recently to English, the extent of Sanskrit learning also receded in Kashmir as in other parts of the country. But it did not disappear entirely, and its continued presence was noted by foreign experts like Theodore Aufrecht and Aurel Stein just a hundred years ago. The flame has been kept alive in modern times by Pandit Jagdhar Zado and Nityanand Shastri, academics like Madhusudan Kaul Shastri and Jankinath Kaul Kamal, and administrators like Pandit Parmanand. How brightly it will burn in the future depends upon the interest and the efforts of the present generation. But, even if it is not forthcoming in sufficient measure, the rich contribution from Kashmir will always remain a valuable part of Sanskrit literature.

(Adapted from a talk to EECSS, New Delhi sometime back by Sh. A. N. D. Bakur, former Ambassador of India and a well known translator of Sanskrit classics in the country.)

Mubarak Mahara Chw They have shifted to a new house in the recent past

St. Surinder Saraf & Family (from Faridabad) - 404-A, Amarapali Exotica
Apptis (E-8), Sector-50, Noida - 201 307 (Tel. - 434767)

Sh. L. N. Kaul & Family (from Sector-50) -162, Shiv Kallya Apartments
(D-19), Sector-51, Noida - 201 307 (Tel. - 248075)

"Aahan Mahara Bh Chuss Kashur Battu"
Bitter Realities

"Pandits in Valley: Victims of miserable living conditions, govt apathy"

"Srinagar, Feb 21 At a time when the state government has failed to take serious steps in bringing back the displaced Kashmiri Pandits, many members of this community, who continued to stay in valley in the last 17 years, are at the verge of leaving Kashmir in a bid to settle outside. Court-ordered mediation can only ensure a peaceful solution for the citizens of Kashmir.

"Our condition is little better than animals. The government is little interested in paying any attention to us," said Roop Krishna Raina, a resident of Atara/Atara, who lives in Mattan.

Roop Krishna and his family shifted from the village Atara to Mattan town in Anantnag in March 2003 following the massacre of 24 Pandits by unknown gunmen at Naadiyar in Shopian. Since then two-room shack makes Roop’s house in the town. The house, in fact, is a cavern where the in-mates have to stoop down to enter the main door.

The family comprises of six members father, mother, wife and two children. The family is using one room as kitchen. The other room is used as their drawing, guest and bed room at the same time. An open field outside the house is their bathroom as well as toilet.

Krishna’s is not the only family, worried about their living conditions. Nine other Pandit families shifted from other villages Memin, Leitgam, and Himmahar are also clustered in Mattan. All these Pandits have been accommodated in the houses of their co-religionists, who have migrated from the valley in 1996.

“We have approached the government with our problems, but nobody takes note of us”, grieves another resident, Satish Raina. He adds, “We gave representations to the chief minister, divisional commissioner and deputy commissioner to shift us to safer places. We are yet to get any response from them...”

A resident of Anantnag, Triloknath Tikka is angry over non-fulfillment of promises made to them by central leaders few years before. “When Naadiyar massacre took place, we all decided to leave the valley. But the then deputy Prime Minister L K Advani and Congress president Sonia Gandhi persuaded us to stay back and ensured every kind of protection and economic help, but nothing was done for us,” he complains.

Now, they feel deserted and deceived. “We cannot live in such conditions permanently. If the government continued with its callous attitude, we will be left with no option than to move out of the valley,” said a group of Pandits in one voice.

(Excerpts of a report by Shabir Dar, Kashmir Times online edition dated Feb 21, 2007; Courtesy: Dr. Vipin Srivastava, J&K)

Farooq Abdullah & Maqbool Butt - What is the Connection?

The pictures (supposed to have been taken in Mirpur, Pakistan) of Dr Farooq Abdullah, ex-Chief Minister of J&K, shows him along with Maqbool Butt (Founder JLF, head circled). It may be recalled that Maqbool Butt was hanged by the Indian Govt for murder charges.

(Picture Courtesy: Pawan Darani via net)

Pandits ignored again

Govt. of India has announced an ex-gratia relief of more than 150 crores recently for the victims of year 2002 riots in Gujrat. But does anyone care about more than 3,50,000 internally displaced Kashmiri Pandits now in 18th year of their exile?

From Greater Noida

A Resident Directory of Pandits living in Greater Noida, was released recently on the eve of Hurrath. More than 100 families, presently living here, have been listed in the directory compiled and circulated by Kashmiri Welfare & Cultural Association, Greater Noida.

".... Tyaagha Khorran Laagh Vaeraagha Khraav ...."
Moments of Togetherness - Let noble thoughts prevail

On Navreh, let us resolve to live the moments of togetherness so that the joy of having been together leaves its fragrance behind revitalizing the very fiber of our being.

Edward Guinan writes: “Love and must be lived today, despite the pain and difficulty of life. Tomorrow can carry the tenderness and peace which we live now.”

To love is to endure. It means to come closer and within the hearts of fellow brethren that thrives to the beat of love. It can be possible by giving love profusely and unceasingly without expecting. Expectations make us the victims of misery. Human situations are delicate. A soft word, a sweet smile, an emotional touch wins the hearts and makes the bonds stronger. Even the smallest acts of expressing love and concern for others have immense value in bonding us together. It means helping others in humility and anonymity, merging the ego and conquering the deceit, accommodating the others’ views and accepting the limitations -whether our own or that of others without getting disturbed. These are the props that strengthen the bonds of togetherness; making it to sustain the onslaughts of time.

We have as such, parse, to prefer the process of self-improvement in order to receive the undercurrents of light and power for the cozy mental cottage. We have to dig deep within the darkest caves of our hearts to discover, for ourselves, the springs bubbling with waters of love that will purify us of the impurities within.

To be together means to summon the strength to be calm in turbulence, counter criticism by self-analysis, vice by virtue, hatred by love, ignorance by wisdom, insult by broad smile and retaliation by composure. While discharging an office of responsibility we should not compromise with principles even though battling with impediments created by the brokers of greed, power and avarice. Time will convict and condemn them to live bereft of inner peace. Remember there is no revenge as complete as forgiveness. So, let us then pray that the dreams of living together become a reality, harmony prevails and we feel satisfied, filled and serene.

(A.D. Veshin

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A brief update (ending March 2007) of the upcoming.

Socio-Cultural Centre

Payment made to Noida Authority towards the basic land cost, interest & penal interest : more than Rs. 25 Lacs. approximately. Almost the entire amount has been donated by the community members living in Noida.

As per the available information, the date of Bhoomi Pooyta will be announced shortly by the Welfare Association after the formal registration of land with the authority. However, complete details can be obtained from the Welfare Association or the members of Socio-Cultural Committee.

IT IS OUR PROJECT. DONATE GENTLY

in the form of an A/c Payee Cheque/DD favoring

"Kashmiri Migrants Welfare Association, Noida A/c 1047"

Remember a fellow Activist - A decade of separation

Late Prof. R.P Raina an educationist, a journalist, social worker & above all an activist, worked relentlessly for the rights & dignity of victims of terrorism & injustice at large. Post displacement in 1989/90, he was actively involved with the movement of several campaigns urging to crush the ugly head of valley. He was also fearless awareness through had launched and that threw socio-cultural & political Prof. Raina passed away on days of having met a fatal road New Delhi while returning to his attended a meeting related to the displaced community’s issues.

"Paannyaar" pays its homage to this great activist of the community.

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Welfare association in Noida has made elaborate arrangements for complete "Mrityu Sandhya" & the same is available at any given point of time.

Contact person : Sh. M. L. Kaul, Nilgiri-I, Sector-34, Noida
Tel.: 0120-2506283, Mobile: 9871485830

*Late Shri P.K. Kaul (can be seen wearing Kurta on the right side) at a Navreh function in Noida. Shri Kaul, an IAS officer of 1951 batch, retired as Cabinet Secretary in Aug. 1986, before serving as Union Commerce, Defence & Finance Secretary as well as a member of Atomic Energy and Space Commissions in India. Later on he was chosen as an Indian Ambassador to the USA. It is believed that Kaul’s stint as ambassador initiated the policy to reconnect with the Indian American community - an effort that is paying handsome dividends now.

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Paannyaar extends its heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families.

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\"..... Habbha Yi Chhui Gummaanai .....\"
"Please accept my warm congratulations for bringing out a beautiful news magazine Paunnyaar for the biradari members. I hope that it will cater to the needs of the biradari members living within the NCR region very well...."

- Dr. R. N. Shargya, Lucknow (Former Sr. Vice President AIFKS)

"Thanks for Paunnyaar. I take this opportunity to wish you & your team for an excellent effort. Let us all strive to find our community prospering and pray for your continued guidance...."

- Sunil Shukla, Chairman, Political Affairs, Kashmiri Sanstuti, Delhi

"Paunnyaar is a good quality newsletter. With it nicely written editorial, the entire get-up is quite professional. Dr. K. N. Pandita's article is a thought provoking one and, I feel this is the reality keeping in view the ground realities, though we cannot forget our roots...."

- J. N. Kaul, Sec-50, Noida

"Rameshji, thanks for sending me a copy of Paunnyaar. It is quite useful and carries a lot of information which was not possible otherwise...."

- J. N. Kaul, Sec-61, Noida

"Paunnyaar has come up very nicely. I wish it could have come up earlier...."

- Sanjay Bhan, Sec-25, Noida

"Dr. K. N. Pandita's article published in the second issue of esteemed Paunnyaar is indeed a thought provoking one. There are many points which I am in full agreement with the author. The crux of the article which I understand is that the author's focus is on modernisation which he terms as a progressive approach.

It gives an impression that the learned author believes in atheism. The author seems to be an authority on current social trends and issues, on Globalization and on Civilizations, but he definitely seems to have contraventions in his own thoughts on religion. Moreover his view on Maaj Kasheer is not at all an inspiring one. At the time when our Maaj Kasheer needs its sons the most, we are contemplating to disown her. This indeed is a very dissonant view, at least for me, because I subscribe to what Lord Rama said: "fortunate उन्नतिकार्य स्वार्थमें समर्थी।"

i.e. One's mother and homeland are greater than even the heaven...."

- Dr. Rajesh Bhat (ITC, Delhi)

Instead of analyzing Dr. K. N. Pandita's article - "Kashmiri Pandits - A Moment of Intrusion in an in positive manner; the debate on the write-up, in various quarters, is turning up for a "kill". Nobody has asked him a question that a person who has worked tirelessly...what made him give up? Nobody ever came up and asked Mr. Pandita, while he was globetrotting, if he needed help. While on the other hand somebody has immediately jumped to take credit that "he" was the first person to invite Mr. Pandita to speak and that was Mr. Pandita's first visit to USA. Again, when Mr. Pandita seeks forgiveness and says that he cannot "fool" his own people, he has been magnanimous by not telling the people that they did not support the leaders enough. In addition, that sentence has been taken and portrayed in a not well-meaning manner with an ulterior motive to enjoy the brickbats from a fence line.

How many of us have tried to follow up with Ms. Pandita as to where his representation is leading the community? I give me few names.... With a community, which is not even interested in knowing how a single person may be struggling to achieve something...how can you expect an old man like Mr. Pandita to feel motivated.

His write-up is not a rejection of ideas, but it is giving up in front of a community, which wants things to come easy in life. It is so easy to read. As per my understanding, it is not giving up an "homeland", but how saffronites became a hurdle in that. He seems to be hinting at how few of us were not ourselves convinced with the idea...so what homeland do we demand? The betrayal is from us...

He has struggled for years and he must be a tired man. If you disregard his theory, I dare every one...work towards proving him wrong...instead of using keyboard and google searches.

Though I may also not agree completely with his thoughts, but we have a generation gap and a different kind of experience. So let us constructively debate his ideas.... And for me I agree with most of his writing except giving-up our idea on our 'Homeland'...i.e. Panun Kashmir...irrespective of whether saffronites like it or not..." ........."

- Pawan Duranti, New Delhi

After his "great introspection and cool thinking" Dr. K.N Pandita has expressed his opinion on different social issues of Kashmiri Pandits. But I have observed it by studying the behaviour and the writings of most of the people who visit foreign lands that their attitude becomes global in due course of time. Commerce occupies most of their thinking space and global outlook at the cost of cultural ethos is presented as the right attitude. I disagree with it. I disagree with this thought process with dignity.

It is true that return of the migrants (as they are called) as such is an impossible proposition because the next generation has already settled out of the valley but reading of the next two paragraphs of the article presents one side of the picture. Even if it is believed that what is claimed in the section of the article was true hypothetically, but it shall not be forgotten that a community / a society is a heterogeneous structure. There are different levels of social stratification in the society. It will be a folly to believe that each and every person of the community is to excel in life and be prosperous as presumed by Dr. Pandita. The fact is that the people who excel in their lives attract community attention, they enjoy dignity and esteem. The question is, if we have to grow as a community, the thinking process shall be "How to grow as a whole". The thought process shall convey a panoramic view that carries sense for all the sections of society whether a person keeps a global outlook or otherwise. We cannot afford to leave behind the underprivileged or the disadvantaged sections of our community-with no strengths to rely upon. My friends rely upon the opportunity in Britain or USA for an expensive course in education for their children to be better off, but with my meager means this is not practical for me. I rely upon the moral strength that I get by going to an Ashram, and I believe my prayer is heard. The plight may be same for me and my friend but can we reject one for the other? It must not be forgotten that liberation from burdenings sooner or later results in Hipnotism - a free flowing society. The concept has already failed in the world.

One more thing I would like to share with all. Our Dharma is SaiNITAN. It is universal. We cannot call God to belong to Kashmiri Pandits exclusively, every breath in and breath out is a process of living and death and claiming exclusivity of gods to Kashmiri Pandits is not a fair idea. Dr. Pandita has written '[...steal half an hour every week and impart broad lines of our culture, mythology...to younger generation at home]'. Its, I believe a misappropiated expression is the whole write-up. He has dismantled gods, Astromys, Buh's, dress, language, the sophistication of cultural touch to women, rites, rituals etc etc and kept whole stock of such strengths of a common Kashmiri Pandit on altar for the commercial well being of an individual which I believe will then result in the outburst of commercial ratrace and a collapse of the community as a social identity. Struggle for survival, within the parameters of cultural ethos and the limits of time and place, add gravity to living from generation to generation, which shall not be swept away by a stroke of pen.

Arvind Sheh, New Delhi

Dr. Pandita has made some thought provoking analysis in his article "Kashmiri Pandits - A Moment of Intrusion in an in positive manner; We are very heartened by the actions of RIK members who have shown a passion and a 'CAN DO' spirit in the defense of Kashmiri Pandit rights and culture. I am shocked to see some negative comments on Dr. Pandita's analysis. What is more disheartening is the apparent disrespect shown to one of our leading thinkers and writers by some of our younger KPs. How many of us know Dr. Pandita's credentials and contributions? He has tirelessly represented us with the European Parliament and other organizations within United Nations NGO's dealing with Kashmir. For the last 17 years, Dr. Pandita has worked diligently with IAKF and IEKF, making presentations to educate the world about the plight of Kashmiri Pandits The balanced report issued by Ms. Nicholson on Jammu and Kashmir in not an accident but the efforts Dr. Pandita and others. Dr. Pandita is in his seventies and still active, whereas his contemporaries are busy doing Havans and totally divorced from the dire stalls that Kashmiri Pandits find themselves in. We need more people like Dr. Pandita to make us think think think and come up with SOLUTIONS so that KP's will survive.

Hira FotaDar, Cleveland, Ohio
"On Dr. Pandita's Introspection and Prescriptions"
A. N. Raul Sahib

I have gone through Dr. K.N. Pandita's 'scholarly' essay on "Kashmiri Panditas: A Moment of Introspection" in Jan-March 2007 issue of Pannuvar, partly with interest but mostly with anguish coming from my personal finity, for whom the KP community has a lot of respect, particularly for the pioneering role that he played in highlighting the plight of the community in exile at national and international fora, the present article, as he himself expected, has indeed disappointed not only many of his "friends and colleagues with whom he has closely worked together", but the entire community. If Dr. Pandita feels that by not speaking out, on the basis of his introspection, what he feels about the future of the community, he would "prove untrue to my conscience" and "history will not spare us", then those who feel differently, must also be allowed to speak out now, to be true to their own conscience.

While one cannot disagree with the learned author that our forced exile has enabled us "to breathe the air of freedom outside the mountain curtailed valley of Kashmir to open our wings for soaring into the skies and scaling new heights", it is difficult to reconcile to his exhortation that we should tear apart from our roots and give up once for all our silent struggle and legitimate aspirations of returning to our homeland. Why should we, I would like to ask, give up our claim to go back and regain what was ours and what we have lost, even if it takes decades more to achieve that? Throwing away the last shred of despair after blowing up trumpets all these years, would tantamount to surrendering before the fundamentalists' designs and projecting ourselves as spineless people. In other words, it would mean that the militants did us a favour by hounding us out of the "mountain-curtailed" prison to enable us "to breathe the air of freedom outside". This thesis of the author is totally unacceptable.

Coming now to the future of our youth. Our young boys and girls, even under the worst of circumstances faced by their parents in exile, are already soaring into the skies and scaling new heights not only in India but in all corners of the globe. Those who choose to make their lives in the spaces of their cities, towns and villages in the Valley, have now excelled in engineering, medicine, information technology, aeronautics, hospitality industry, mass communications, film industry, event management, banking, finance and other sectors and are bringing laurels to their community and the country. Quite a number of them are adopting various other avenues hitherto unexplored and many are setting up their own businesses and enterprises and also entering defence services. So, the author need not worry on that count. In this context, his advice to our youth to abandon their motherland, pack off their belongings and get to settle in foreign lands, stock and barrel is uncalled for.

While the word "identity" which the author is talking about is the very basis of his identity, that is Kashmiri language, our dear mother tongue. It is a strange logic that a scholar of his stature who has himself grown up in the Kashmiri soil, inheriting and speaking in Kashmiri language which never came in the way of his acquiring excellence in English, Urdu and Persian and may be other foreign languages, is today saying that Kashmiri is "not a developed language", "has no literary potential", and "has no scientific script". By saying so, he has heaped insult on countless scholars, literati, notables, playwrights and poets of repute, dead and living, who have produced enormous popular and classic literature in Kashmiri language, including translations of literary works from other languages, and won national and international recognitions. It is an insult also to numerous present day scholars, linguists, teachers and researchers of Kashmiri language, poets and prose writers, who are adding to the vast literature through their books and writings in community journals in easy-to-read Devnagri script. Reference here is to monumental work done by Kashmir Samachar, Aitar and Haath and by Mumbai and Kolkata KP Societies. We have established new artists, composers and musicians who continue to enrich the Kashmiri lyrics and poetry with soul stirring music and are producing CDs and cassettes which are in great demand all over India and abroad wherever KP resides. It is an insult also to those individual activists and institutions who are struggling day in and day out to instil the love of our mother tongue in our youth and children so as to make them retain their true identity. It is, therefore, heartrending to hear from the author that "Kashmiri is fast eroding among our youth and let the chips fall where they may" and "we are not insulted to all these nomads". I would like to ask the author if he allows us to loose our mother tongue "without any remorse", what is the "true identity" that we shall project to the world outside? Instead of advising, as an elderly member of our community and as a former teacher, that we should do everything possible to preserve and promote our language, he is sermonizing against its use in day-to-day life and advising to learn German and French instead.

While our compatriots in other States and communities are jealously guarding and promoting their own languages, cultures and traditions and at the same time, achieving phenomenal successes in the country and abroad, ours is the only community which is not taking the gradual eclipse of our mother tongue, a language approved by the Constitution of India, and our cultural traditions, assomising serious.

The author has further denounced the practice of replicating or building of temples and shrines of our revered gods and goddesses, saints and sages in Jammu, Delhi or other parts of the country in order to keep their faith, customs and traditions of the community alive. We must compliment all those community members who have managed, with great dedication and devotion, to build these places of worship to retain the semblance of their erstwhile life and rituals. Why should the author forget that it has been our tradition, from times immemorial, to adore and follow various saints and sages to organize their lives in a disciplined manner and, if the community has thought of rebuilding their shrines even in alien soils, what wrong have they done? They offer the right atmosphere for the community, old and the young, to pray and meditate at the feet of their gurus. Ironically, the author himself advises "each Pandit family to steal half an hour every week to impart our culture, mythology and history to the younger generation in the home in a manner to create in them a sense of belonging to a specific cultural stream", even though same breath he says that the effort be given if there is no response. The temples and places of worship that have been created by our community are not a waste of time and money but are actually meant to renew our faith and that of our younger generation in our age old culture, customs and traditions which we were forced to leave behind.

The author has also referred to the emancipation of our womenfolk. What makes him feel that our women are "in shackles"? Like their counterparts in the rest of India, our women and young girls are also going ahead admirably in every walk of life. There is hardly a Kashmiri home today where a woman or more than one are not working. They are now in every profession: medicine, engineering, teaching, IT, banks, air hostesses, call centers and the like. Their dress codes and food habits are dictated by the nature and the timings of their work. Why should the author feel so uncomfortable with our women and girls wearing the elegant saris at work or on social occasions? The Pandi ladies are an alternative to cumbersome Pheran in early thirties on the advice of Pandi Kashyap Randhu, the great social reformer, and has been acknowledged as the graceful attire of the Indian woman which even foreign women crave to drape upon.

Thankfully the author has not yet denounced the Salvator Kannez which women all over the country, even in the conservative south, now prefer to wear at home and at the place of their work. The author is strongly advising our womenfolk to adopt the Jewish dress of trousers and shirts and thereby deprive the society of all the colour and glitter. Please do not enter the domain that is not yours. Let our women be free to choose their own dress and style.

Again, by advising Kashmiri Pandit women "to break the shackles" which make them the "slaves of the kitchen", the next that we may expect from the author would perhaps be an advice to KPs to live in Chinese-type communes where we should have food from common kitchen with women going out to their jobs in offices, in fields and factories in rough and coarse shirts and trousers. His "changed agenda of food habits of the community members" could also perhaps mean that our love for ragas josh, monji, haath, sotkal, vosta-haath, dan-aloo, nauriyakhia is hacked, outwitted and out of tune with the changing times, which should be substituted with more practical fast foods, available off the counters from a variety of food joints dotting our cities. Our womenfolk love to cook at home for their families, on their respective places of work. Occasionally eating out in restaurants is fine but cannot become the order of the day. The ideas propounded by the author are totally ill conceived and ill timed and would lead to complete disintegration of the community and of our families, macro and micro both. Of late, our brilliant and enterprising youth are coming on their own and are struggling to locate their roots. They have successfully spearheaded quite a few causes and movements to fight for justice and are striving to enliven our love for Kashmiri language, literature, arts and music. Bless them for all that they are doing, but please do not discourage or dishearten them by such unsolicited sermons and prescriptions.

(Thew write is a former: Editor-in-Chief of 'Kashmir Samachar', is currently the editor of the bi-monthly newsletter 'Milichaar Patrika' being published from Splita Sandhiy, Ghalia)
Kashmiri Sayings, Proverbs and Riddles : Random Curios of Kashmiri Folk-literature.

S. N. Paddita.

SAYINGS:

Shenkran Mahkaz, Na Phalaan -Tis- Na Ghallan.
Shenkra's axe neither wears out nor melts away. - meaning:

Something constant and everlasting.

Meeh Poandh-Tis-Zeeith Ummar
A pleasant sneeze and long life. - meaning:

Whenever a person sneezes it is an omen of his long life.

Sheikh Bahke, Kallis Sahnhe-Tis-Patiga Nukhe.
The Sheikh's order is a 'Yes' today and a 'No' tomorrow. - meaning:

A fickle minded person who changes his stand frequently.

RIDDLES:

Andhur Kothi Gandhaira Sabha, Tinnia Bhiha Taz-Bha-Taz
An assembly of Gandhairas (semi-gods) inside a room, who are sitting in ordered rows. - meaning: Teeth in the mouth.

Wazalis Ghanaas Chittki Kachhpeet
White lambs huddled in a crimson stable-meaning: Teeth in the mouth.

(Sivanta is a son of Neeta & Rakesh Beera of Sector-41, Noida)

From Our Roots

The corpus of Kashmiri folk-literature is immensely rich and interesting. Of this corpus, the sayings, proverbs and riddles constitute the most precious fruits of Kashmiri wisdom, humour, satire, pun, wit and sometimes even an account of history of the land and its people. It is believed that Kashmiri has a greater number of them than any other language. Their phraseology bears the impress of immemorial antiquity. Animated and inflamed with most exquisite metaphors whose conception and compositions are sublime, they are a mix of vivid truth which sometimes even stir internal emotions. They reign in them both the power and fullness of genius and being the coinage of the common Kashmiri masses have also rooted themselves in the popular mind of the people. Not seldom they raise sensation of wonder but all are also valuable in shedding light upon the remote past of the Kashmiri people. Therefore a Kashmiri is fond of using these pragmatic maxims in his conversation.

And indeed every Kashmiri ought to be consciously proud of such colloquial heritage. Yet, unfortunately, it has been practically neglected.

The unfortunate fact that the use and practice of our mother tongue, in particular by our younger generation, has fallen to a gradual disuse in recent times owing to displacement from our native land- Kashmir. This has therefore also adversely affected the currency of our sayings, proverbs and riddles. Some years back, expressing a point of view on the subject, I had then stated: 'while an average adult Kashmiri uses some of these expressions to compress his oral thoughts in a pithy manner during a conversation, their exchange is almost unheard of when our youngsters, who know the spoken aspects of Kashmiri, speak to each other. The truth is that they have not heard of these extant pearls of our mother tongue and hence stand deprived of the amazing richness of their hidden content and meaning. Another aspect of this truth is, even the adults have far less of these oral tablets etched on their ready memory to pull out in an oral expression.'

However, inspired by the hidden treasures and the desire to bring these unique effusions of immeasurable richness to the attention and appreciation of our community members, particularly the youth, Shri Ramesh Manvati, the worthy Editor of this beautiful newsletter ceased me of this important matter sometime back and suggested to me, if we could, attempt to retrieve these literary jewels of our mother tongue. Without a second thought I readily accepted this valuable proposition. Prompted by this consideration and in compliance to Shri Manvati's pious instruction, I now attempt to share with the readers these curios of Kashmiri folk-literature, which have been a closely pursued interest of my studies in Kashmir for past several years though interrupted at some stage due to my occupation with work of different nature, through this and subsequent columns in this newsletter. These, I hope, may not turn out to be too lean a compilation for the expectations of the readers.

Let me also share with the readers that the Kashmiri sayings, proverbs and riddles, along with their brief rendering in English, that will appear in this publication from time to time are the ones that I have heard in my life (from my family elders and Kashmiri acquaintances) and those having been read by me in various assorted sources. The actual number of these linguistic pearls is much larger than the stock I know of and will share with the readers.

Of the ones I know, some I have remembered without much effort but most of them needed to be written down so that they would become retrievable at a later date. That occasion, to my mind, seems to have come with the present opportunity. I now give them with the satisfaction of feeling that opportunity provided to me by the Editor of this newsletter is a reward for the labour I have devoted to the task in the past.

Lastly, let me state that it is likely that variants of some sayings, proverbs and riddles, which I will present from time to time, too may be in vogue. And should any other change in their composition be in the notice of the discerning readers, it would be greatly appreciated if such notices are brought to the knowledge of the Editor for inclusion and publication in the future issues of Paanvyaar.

May all the beautiful expressions of Kashmiri language, which are there in our tongue but regrettable on wane in our memory, find a fresh and renewed zest to embellish our mother tongue.

Contd......

"Lal Bo Dhraayas Lo-larry, Cshaandaan Loossum Dhyaen Kyo Raath;"

Paanvyaar Issue-03 / Nirvan Samvat-18
April - June 2007
Navreh celebrations in Faridabad

Thousands of community members participating in Navreh celebrations at 'Hari Parbat' (replica site) atop Arraval Hills, Anangpur village in Faridabad. A special nightlong youth festival organised by the dedicated community youth (under the banner of Roots-in-Kashmir) was inaugurated by Anupam Kher, the noted actor on this occasion. Many prominent artists of the community like Aabas Rustum Sopori, Sushma Kalla, Neerja Pandit, Master Raj Pandit, Dhananjay Kaul, Daldeep Langoo, Sanjay Raina, Arjun Kaul & Ms. Jyoti Patwari performed live during the occasion. On this auspicious occasion, a special memorial dedicated to Ladde was unveiled and dedicated to the community by well known writer Smt. Chandrakant & Sh. J.N. Kaul, Padamshree in presence of many prominent scholars, writers, activists of the community. The overall programme was supervised by Kashmiri Sewak Samaj, Faridabad.

Earlier on the eve of Herath, KSS had also organised early morning prayers at Sharika Bhawan in sector-17 in which large number of community members participated. A periodic newsletter, covering the activities of KSS, and edited by Sh. N.N. Kak, was also launched on this occasion.

RIK Protest

"Yasin Malik, who has admitted of killing Kashmiri Pandits is now running a campaign in the name of Humanity to gain public sympathy" was the predominant view of the K.P. youth activists at a recent protest rally near Janatar Mantar in New Delhi, against the injustice meted out to more than 350000 internally displaced Kashmiri Pandits.

From Shipra Suncity, Ghaziabad

Dr. S. K. Pandita presently working in Appolo Hospital, Sarita Vihar, New Delhi has offered his free consultation services for the displaced community. He can be contacted on Mobile No. 9810203114 between 6pm - 10pm on any working day. His area of specialization is Cancer Surgery & Laparoscopic Surgery.

From Bangalore:

A Healthy Sign

A large number of Pandit women took an active part in the recent elections to Kashmiri Hindu Samiti in Bangalore. Sh. R. K. Mattoo was re-elected as the President. The other office bearers who have been elected include: R. K. Bhan, Secretary; O. Bajri, Joint Secretary; S. Thathoo & Rajesh Pajoo as Vice Presidents & R. Sazawal as the Treasurer. The elected Executive Members include Dr. Vijay Chauhan, Arvind Waza, Bharat Rawal, Rajinder Kaul, Vijay Kallu, Sajish Chughtu, R. K. Gadru, Nirmal Munshi, Manjit Dhar, Rakesh Ganjoo & Kamal Warikoo.

For the last over one decade, KHS has been playing an active role towards the welfare of the community and has been instrumental in getting six medical seats reserved for the displaced community in Kamataka in addition to a number of engineering seats in various Engineering colleges in the state.

From Kolkata:

Golden jubilee number of Vitasta was released some time back during the AGM of AIKS, hosted by Kashmiri Sabha in Kolkata. The theme of this particular annual issue is "Sabhas, Samaj and Samellan - A Mantra for Kashmiri Pandit Solidarity." The voluminous issue, ably edited by Dr. B. K. Moza and his team including Mrs. Niva Kaul, Mrs. Prabha Tunka and Mrs. Bharati Kaul, gives a brief introduction of various associations of Kashmiri Pandits spread across the country. It may be noted that Kashmiri Sabha in Kolkata is one of the oldest Sabhas dedicated to the cause of Kashmiri Pandits in the country and the first issue/annual number of Vitasta was published way back in the year 1960.

(Waenyyar compliments Kashmiri Sabha, Kolkata behind such a wonderful and useful Golden issue of Vitasta.)
Sangeet Natak Acadami confers

First "Ustad Bismilla Khan Yava Prakash" on Abhay Rustum Sopori

at a glittering function at 'Meghdoot Theatre' in N. Delhi on 23rd of March in presence of a galaxy of artists and personalities drawn from various walks of life. The award was presented by Ram Niwas Mirdha, Chairman SNA and carries a plaque, an Angyogaram and a cheque of Rs. 250000. Sangeet Natak Acadami, the premier institution, set up by Govt. of India more than fifty years back to preserve and promote the rich cultural legacy of the country, has instituted this award for the first time recently to honour and help nurture further the talent of young artists below 35 years of age.

Born in Srinagar, Abhay has a profound sense of music. He has been learning instrumental and vocal music both from his grandfather Pt Shambhoo Nath Sopori (hailed as the father of Indian Classic Music in J&K) and his legendary father, Pt. Bajran Sopori.

Abhay is the youngest and the only musician from whole of north of India to receive this award. He has participated in many prestigious festivals both within and outside the country and has been honoured earlier also for his brilliant performances.

Aditya Raj Kaul, a prominent 18 year old youth activist of the community, recently featured in the special issue of India Today, a prominent weekly of the country, along with 24 other youth icons, including well known golfer Jeev Milkha Singh, Abhav Dhowshwar, (Novelist), Kailash Kher, (Singer) etc. The youth icons were chosen by the India Today group after an indisputable survey in the country.

Arvind Kejriwal, a social activist has noted about Aditya Raj in the publication: "He represents the people of today who are losing patience with governance and judiciary. They have realised that crime actually touches their lives so they are doing something about it.

It may be noted that Aditya, along with many other KP Youth activists, played a key role in "Justice for Priyadarshini Tatwani campaign" last year.

With Best Compliments From:

Dr. Anil Makru
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With the Community

Inviting creative and talented community members, young & old, to contribute in the form of write-ups, articles, poems, jokes etc. on relevant topics/themes, concerning Kashmiri Pandit community & its future. Share your success stories, pain & agony with the community through Paanynar.

Write to the editor at:
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Build Bridges

"O earthen vessel,

strengthen me. May all beings regard me with friendly eyes!
May I look upon all creatures with friendly eyes!

With a friend's eye, may we regard each other!"

Yajur Ved

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"Walliv Kashiriss Manzh Karray Paanvaen Katthi Baath"

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