

epicenter of the supreme bliss, as it were. It need not be based on any reasoning or offer any justification for the views it puts forth. It is the voice of truth, benevolence and beauty. It is never wrong. It is never unkind. It takes a holistic view of the situation. It is not only good for us but also for others, the whole world, everything animate and inanimate. Our own vision is circumscribed by limitations of sorts but the inner voice crosses all barriers of time and space. It defies all calculations and sometimes baffles us.

In our life we achieve many things; we amass wealth of different hues and then feel a sense of possession. We use all this and enjoy all this in order to meet our necessities, for our comfort and to revel in luxury. This gives us vanity of being possessors and enjoyers. Then our inner voice tells us that we are neither. We pay heed to our inner voice and realize that all that we possess is held in trust and all that we enjoy is enjoyed on behalf of some one else whom the Shri Gita calls '*Bharta*', the provider and '*Bhokta*', the enjoyer. He is also referred as '*Maheshwara*' or the Supreme Master and Supreme Master He no doubt is. He creates, sustains and annihilates the entire universe. He manages, controls and directs every activity. He has created a chain of cause and effect. He is the causeless cause of the entire cosmos. It is He who is seated within us and acts as our inner voice.

Now this inner voice is indispensable for more reasons than one. Take the case of a situation when we are confronted with a problem and want to decide the suitable course of action. We are unable to take a decision because there is a strong tussle between what the head says and what the heart wants. The head dictates us a course that it thinks is right and just. The heart on the other hand wants us to adopt a course, which is sympathetic and kind. The result is that we are in a fix not knowing which of the two courses will in the long run be beneficial and satisfying. At this moment the inner voice comes into play and it immediately guides us to take the most suitable course of action. The head speaks the voice of intellectual reasoning. The heart speaks the voice of compassionate feeling. The inner voice is the voice of the soul, the voice of the spirit and the voice of the Supreme seated within us.

Once we act on the advice of the inner voice, we should not immediately try to evaluate it or judge it because with our limitations and shortcomings we are liable to misjudge and come to a wrong conclusion. We should follow the inner voice, take

the directed course and then forget about it. After the lapse of a reasonable time if we sit and examine the course that we had taken, we will come to realize that this was the best option available for the benefit of all concerned. Such actions cannot and should not be examined from a narrow point of view. The approach of the inner voice is a holistic one and it takes into account a long term benefit and the good of all as has been said, '*Sarvajana sukhaya, sarvajana hitaya* – For everybody's pleasure and everybody's benevolence'.

Whenever we act we are guided by one of the four factors, compulsion, reasoning, instinct or intuition. Sometimes we are obliged to do something under compulsion even though it is against our conscience. The circumstances are compelling, we are coerced, threatened or forced to act against our wishes. Often we use the faculty of our logic and reasoning and chalk the course of our action. There are many actions physical and mental, which we perform instinctively and involuntarily. There are yet other actions of ours that are the result of our intuition. This most probably is what is termed as the inner voice. This is the divine indulgence in our lives. This is the guidance we receive from the Supreme. This is the help and lead that we receive from Him, who wants us to tread on the path of truth and righteousness, light and enlightenment and shun the dark alleys of ignorance and impurity. [[

Editors' Note

We accept write-ups on any topic concerning Kashmir, Kashmiri language and Kashmiris, or a topic of common interest in Hindi, Kashmiri and English. The write-ups should be original and exclusive to '**här-van**', except for News, Views and Reviews. Kindly note that we do not intend to include the previously published material in '**här-van**' except in very special cases. Kindly e-mail your write-ups to us at:

editorharvan@yahoo.co.in

Readers may note that the views expressed in signed articles are not necessarily those of the

Project Zaan or '**här-van**'.

While e-mailing write-ups in Hindi-Kashmiri, kindly also attach the font used. Articles in Kashmiri will only be accepted in the **Standardised Devanagari-Kashmiri Script**.

3rd World Kashmiri Pandit Conference

Jammu ~ 18-19 January 2009

(A Panun Kashmir Initiative)

19th January 2009 will witness the commencement of twentieth year of displacement of Kashmiri Pandits. A whole generation of Kashmiri Pandits has now grown away from the land of their forefathers and a whole generation is in the process of vanishing while mourning the loss of their mooring. It goes, without any doubts, Kashmiri Pandits of either generation are longing for going back to their cultural roots in the lost homeland.

Panun Kashmir has been at the forefront of the back to home movement of displaced Pandits. During last eighteen years Panun Kashmir has actively propagated the creation of a separate homeland for the displaced persons through diplomatic, political and socio-cultural platforms. The holding of massive World Conferences, seminars, mass contact programmes, cultural events, yatras, protests, demonstrations and press conferences etc. have been part of the global campaign launched by Panun Kashmir in its endeavor of getting justice to the beleaguered community.

Panun Kashmir, through historic 1st World Kashmiri Pandit Conference brought the displacement of Kashmiri Pandits to the centre stage. 1st WKPC also warned the global consciousness about the implications of unchecked militarized Islam in Kashmir. Ironically, Panun Kashmir's warning about the happenings in Kashmir being just a testing ground for an eventual global operation was largely ignored. Sadly, the world is now witnessing what Panun Kashmir had predicted 16 years back. Panun Kashmir feels time has once again come for reiterating our fears and apprehensions about the implications of rising religious terrorism. It is keeping this in view Panun Kashmir has decided to hold 3rd World Kashmiri Pandit Conference in Jammu on 18th and 19th January 2009.

3rd World Kashmiri Pandit Conference will seek to achieve the following objectives,

- I To bring focus on terrorism as a serious threat to national unity and integration. Its dimensions and how it affects us. - To lay a firm roadmap for the future of Kashmiri Pandits and how Panun Kashmir will spearhead various initiatives.
- I To educate the society about the economic viability of Panun Kashmir. The role of its entrepreneurship, technocrats and a large pool of community's burgeoning professionals in creating and sustaining economically dependable infrastructural model in Panun Kashmir.
- I To involve eminent social scientists, intellectuals and other members of Kashmiri Pandit civil society in formulating and implementing the strategies for fighting the looming threats to our existence. Also to concretize the ideas regarding survival of Kashmiri Pandits as a distinct religio-ethnic entity.
- I To leverage the advantages visible in the post Amarnath Sangarsh and converting that into a collaboration of rejuvenated nationalist forces for realizing the geo-political aspirations of displaced Kashmiri Pandits.
- I To provide an international platform to people of Jammu and Ladakh for articulating their views and reaching a synergy of action between all other oppressed sections of Jammu and Kashmir.

Editors' Mail

rainaji@gmail.com

Dear Raina Sahib,

Thanks a lot for sending the latest issue of the magazine. I find the articles very interesting and educative in addition to being thought provoking.

I have been trying desperately to get the copy of Akruiti from AIKS but there is no response from them. I have tried almost all email IDs to contact them. Can you help in this regard? My father has compiled few more books and I want them to be re-composed in the approved format of Devanagari-Kashmiri script.

Regards,

Raina

pankajdhar@yahoo.com

Great effort sir,

Congrats also to Panyaar (Noida) and other similar magazines in India to keep up the KP spirit alive and help us in staying connected.

Best Regards,

Punkajj C Dhar

Udhampur, Jammu

Namaskar Mahara!

I thank you for sending me the Sept. 2008 issue of Harvan. I was not aware of the rules and regulations, as the same article also appeared in the Oct. issue of Shehjar. This mistake will not be repeated now.

In my profile you have mentioned the business but the type of business is missing. It was Rural Postal Life Insurance, launched by GOI in the year 1995 for rural masses.

Sincerely,

Chander M. Bhat

Dubai, UAE

Dear Team,

It was a pleasant surprise that I got this KP Publication. I have been indeed starving to get something like this for a long time. Years back when I contributed to Koshur Samachar, it was confiscated by Customs due to their Islamic rules on prohibition on entry of non-Islamic publications depicting Hindu Gods etc. My contact with community has been

I To provide opportunity to massive Saraswat Brahmin community to re-forged and renew their time immemorial ties with their original homeland.

I To create a conducive atmosphere for forging lasting inter-organizational unity among Kashmiri Pandits while appreciating the role of all those individuals and groups based both in India and abroad who in past engaged themselves in such endeavors.

I To confer the most prestigious community award Sharda Samman on distinguished individuals/institutions as a token of community's appreciation of their contribution to Kashmiri Pandit cause in exile.

You will appreciate Panun Kashmir has undertaken to accomplish a mammoth task, which can't be accomplished without the support and cooperation of all sections of our community. We firmly believe the successful culmination of 3rd World Kashmiri Pandit Conference will once again bring the displaced community to the center stage of country's political thought process. It will also reiterate our commitment and resolve to remain restless till the logical achievement of a desired dispensation in our lost homeland. On behalf of Panun Kashmir and 3rd World Kashmiri Pandit Conference organizing committee I take this opportunity to request you for your active support and cooperation for making this historical event a huge success. I, hereby, also extend you a formal invitation to become a part the history in making by attending the programme with your family members.

We shall be announcing the registration modalities and details about our international coordinators soon to facilitate your convenient participation. We shall now be looking forward to your good wishes and blessings for making 3rd World Kashmiri Pandit Conference a huge success. Orzu.

Daya Krishen Kaul
Chief Coordinator
3rd World Kashmiri Pandit Conference,
Jammu.

Editors' Mail

only thru Net and KP Groups at Yahoo that normally discuss current affairs only.

Such rich material in 'här-van' that touches topics from the origin of KP to religious, social, political and medical issues is what my family wants to learn about. The editorial is impressive philosophical guidance that is still relevant in today's rat race. I have now taken a hard copy print out so that the whole family can enjoy the reading.

Thank you once again and God bless the Team.
Best regards,

SL Razdan
razdans@emirates.net.ae

avtar.k.kaul@gmail.com

Dear Editor,

Please include the names in your email mailing list. They are all based in Ahmedabad & Gandhinagar. At present I am forwarding it to them, both 'här-van' and 'Shehjar'. These are well received and effort is greatly appreciated. Some of our members are desirous of contributing articles and news.

With regards,

Avtar K. Kaul,
Secretary, Koshur Samchar
Ahmedabad & Gandhinagar

New Delhi

Thanks Raina Sahib, It is a treat to read the magazine.

Your own,

Vijay Saqi

Respected Raina ji,

Namaskar. I have read your September issue of 'här-van'. It is amazing and rich in knowledge about the Kashmir and our culture. Could you please let me know where I can get the other issues of the magazine?

Sharad Koul

Boise, ID-USA

Dear Mr. Raina,

Thank you for continued distribution of this online magazine. This comes as a fresh breath of air every month and reminds us of our home land, culture

and heritage.

I wanted to request you to add my wife and son's email id to the distribution list. My son is in his school years but I want him to get engaged in all conversations around our culture, language and great thoughts from the people who contribute to this news letter. That is why the request to send him this news letter directly. Hope his young mind benefits from this association. Sometimes external influence works much better than what we do at home.

Thank you and Best Regards,

Rakesh Thaploo
rakeshthaploo@hotmail.com

klbhat@hotmail.com

Dear Mr. Raina,

I am receiving your mails regarding 'här-van'. I read one article written by a doctor. I wonder, is this 'här-van' a medical journal or something else?

With regards,

Dr. Bhat

New Delhi

Dear Mr. Raina,

Thank you for the e-issues of 'har-van' and I appreciate your good work in this regard. I have specially written something for the next issue and trust you find it interesting to accomodate the same in your next issue. I do write occasionally, and will be delighted to send you the material as and when I write. Most of my writings are not related to the kind of essays or stories you normally publish.

Best Wishes,

B.L. Dhar
bldhar@hotmail.com

subhashrazdan@gmail.com

Dear Editor,

I hope your e-magazine Harvan will carry out audio-visual section as a regular feature, which is the need of the medium you are working with. This will not only make magazine interesting but will document the losing heritage of KPs. I think you will give a thought to it.

S.C.Razdan

Nineteen Years after displacement - 2

The village temple of Bhuteshwara across the stream is still there. I went in. The 'lingam' installed there seemed much smaller to me than what it used to be. "Absurd", I told myself.

The Pandit gentleman took me to the new High School. It was a delight to see three new buildings in place there, and students from several surrounding villages were busy in their studies. None of them was acquainted with me, nobody was interested either.

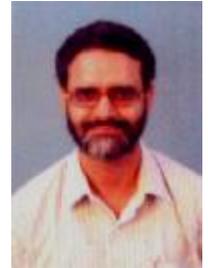
We took a round of the entire village. Every family has constructed new house(s). Couples of old structures that still exist have been thoroughly renovated. The stone boundary-walls have disappeared and high, brick walls have come up everywhere. I met a number of men and women of my age and older. The Pandit gentleman introduced me to them. Some of them extended invitations to their houses for tea. I thanked them. I could perceive greater warmth in the welcome extended by an elderly woman, my mother's age.

After a two and a half hour long stroll we came back to the Pandit's house to have evening tea. Dar joined us an hour later and we went to the *lidder* (river) bank, half a kilometer away. Lidder is magnificent as always. Bridges connect its two banks and there is plenty of traffic plying. We spent the whole evening strolling and talking. Some more people joined us. Dar gave my introduction to those who could not recollect our childhood days. By 9 o'clock Dar dropped me at the Pandit's house. After supper I had a brief conversation with the elderly couple. They were extremely worried about their younger son's marriage. "There are no Hindu girls around. We could find one for the elder son with great difficulty. The younger son is past thirty now. It is a difficult situation. And you know what? Our Muslim friends tell us that let him join us, he will get two."

"It was '*Bhuteshwara*' who prevented us from fleeing at that juncture, probably to allow us to worship him. Our sons hardly ever go there. They are bearded like other Muslim men. Now we have a small grand-daughter. All her playmates are Muslim.

How can she learn our *samskars*? She visits several houses in the neighborhood who may even feed her."

They are in an ambivalent state of mind. Tied to their landed properties on the one hand, and suspicious, rather certain, of losing their Pandit cultural moorings in not so distant future, they look powerless and subdued. I asked them about the *Sahasra-mukhi* Shiva temple that existed on the main road where the Amarnath-bound pilgrims used to halt till afternoon before moving on to Aishmuqam. They looked the other way. 'Since there was no Hindu family to worship the deity there, it was blasted in the early nineties.' My eyes became moist. I had a disturbed sleep.

**Day 3:**

Next morning, I asked for a bucketful of warm-water to bathe. After breakfast, I informed the family that I was going to start my backward journey in another hour, and requested them not to prepare lunch for me.

Dar and the younger son of my hosts accompanied me to the lidder bridge. I had a desire to breathe in some more fresh, cool air.

The Pandit's son left us in an hour and a retired school teacher M. Hassan joined us. Boys and girls from the neighbouring villages were on their way to 'our' High School. "It is indeed a matter of honour", said I to Dar and the retired teacher. The girls, I noticed, had their head, and forehead fully covered, so were their ankles - the 'dress code' has become a part of the culture, I thought.

In a general conversation they expressed their opinion on the future of the valley too. They thought that people were fed up with terrorism but killings and murders are no longer tabooed acts but a part of the post-1990 culture that has taken deep roots. Some of the terrorists have become legends in the folklore, especially those who ran 'slaughter houses' where 'rivals' were butchered. The youth do not abhor

KASHMIR DIARY

killings, loot and arson. These are acts of masculinity, they believe. Since this generation has not co-existed with any 'rival' faith-systems, they cannot tolerate giving space to 'your' festivities and modes of worship. The mind-sets have to change but if the situation persists for another 15 years, no space can ever be created for a rival faith. We have *Madrasas* in every village, town and mohalla and young boys and girls are compulsorily sent there to learn *hadith* and Quranic teachings which strictly prohibit idol-worship.

They asked me to build a couple of rooms on the mound where my home lay, for spending summer months. "That will be good for your old mother too", they advised. Dar invited us to a cup of tea at his residence. Thereafter, I took leave of the Pandits who looked sad. Dar accompanied me to the main road. A bus with room for me came in a couple of minutes. Dar and I hugged before I boarded the Anantnag bound bus.

Anantnag, my college town, a town of several fresh and sulphur water-springs looked bright but crowded. I got down near Anantnag 'Nagabal' and walked towards the temple. A soldier checked my bag and the identity card and unlocked the gate. All the places of Hindu worship are under security cover in what was a Hindu Kingdom nearly 600 years ago and whose last Hindu King provided shelter and lands to Sayyads who were being persecuted in their homes in central Asia.

The condition of the springs controlled by 'Nagabal committee' (from Jammu) is in a sad state in contrast to the innermost Vishnu temples that are under the control of a Mahant. The Mahant has added a Devi temple and installed a huge *lingam* during the past 19 years. The 'Pujari' of the Vishnu temple offered me tea and lunch. The 'Devibal' - the Anantnag Devi temple - some hundred odd yards away from Nagabal is under lock. There was a huge gathering of Muslims, mostly women, at the shrine of 'Reshimol' (Rshi, the father) situated behind 'Devibal'.

I hired an auto and went to Super Bazar to meet A. Rahman, my friend from Mattan. Our meeting lasted for a couple of minutes as he was on way to attend an official meeting elsewhere. Some other acquaintance at the Bazar shook hands with me. One acquaintance among them, Farook, hugged me

and his eyes became moist.

I rushed to the mini-cab stand to move on to Srinagar. I got down at the old Zero-bridge and after security checking reached the official residence of my friend. The whole area is fortified. The local people have converted their residences into hotels where state Govt. employees stay during summer months when the Capital is shifted from Jammu (the winter capital) to Srinagar (the summer capital).

"Will there be peace here any day soon"? I asked the hotel owner, a smart young man. "There are many hurdles," said he. 'Broadly speaking there are three groups or ideologies at work across the valley. The extremists (Taliban) with flowing beards who strictly believe in Nizam-e-Mustafa; the moderates with trimmed beards who want liberal education to co-exist with Madarasa 'training' with no room for any other faith; and the clean-shaven liberals who believe that other faiths could co-exist provided they followed the governing principles of Islam'. The implications were vivid. "So return of Pandit is a sociopolitical lie?" said I. He smiled, "we will know in another month or so. It is only Azad who says it to

boost his image in Delhi, Mufti Sahab will not, nor will any other leader allow it to happen". Remarkable,

KASHMIR DIARY

I thought.

Late in the evening, a person barged into my friend's room unannounced and with a smile on his face, said in a cool voice. "Did you get to know the latest?" And before my friend could say 'yes' or 'no', the 'intruder' announced: "A calf has been killed inside the Devi temple at Chittargul village this afternoon. The members of the three Pandit families still residing there were mercilessly beaten. They have been hospitalized. The police personnel posted there to protect the Pandit families were mute spectators, laughing and enjoying the scene. Such posting is a punishment for security personnel! You must know, I thought, because Chittargul is in your Anantnag". Suddenly, his eyes noticed me. My friend introduced him to me. Sunil (the intruder) sat down.

After exchanging pleasantries, Sunil ordered dinner for me and my friend to 'our' room and went back to his room. Sunil is a middle-ranking officer like my friend but the way the hotel-owner came in person to find out from me if things were well cooked, whether drinks were required to be served, and so forth made me suspicious. "The hotel-owner is quite

courteous”, I told my friend after the hotel-owner went out of the room. My friend retorted rather with a shout, “It is because Sunil is the in-charge for room-allotment, food and so forth. His signatures are important for the hotel-wallahs, some of whom happened to be poor boat-owners a few years ago. They are crorepatris today. Huge sums of money are involved. People get their share, however, much of that goes to politicians of 'all hues' and the bureaucrats. It is a great nexus. In this age of information technology and e-governance, annual durbar-move can be stopped and employees distributed to enable the two capitals to function at both the places throughout the year. Crores could thus be saved but that needs political will and a desire to be transparent in administration”. My friend gulped down a glass of water.

Day-4

The sad news that Sunil broke alerted me. It was prudent to leave the valley soon, I thought. I cancelled my plan to visit the shrines at Tulumula, Shankaracharya, etc. and paid an early morning visit to Zeether where a 'hawan' was in progress. I found the place in good shape. The caretaker of the shrine has put in his best efforts in the maintenance of the shrine and other properties. A *qahwa* session after the *puja* prepared me to start my return journey. My co-passengers in the mini-cab gave me yet another opportunity to learn more about contemporary Kashmir.

I was asked to occupy the middle-seat where a father-daughter duo was already seated. The front and the rear seats were occupied by five tourists from some other part of 'India'. The girl on my right, a medical graduate had come to Kashmir to collect some document from the University. After lunch the girl and her father became friends with me. The girl had been admitted to the medical college at Srinagar some seven years ago. She stayed in the MC hostel with 100 odd girls, 97 of them Muslim. She narrated her tortuous experiences thus. “Twice a week senior women medicos would knock at each door after dinner and summon us to the hostel congregation hall at the ground floor. No one could say 'no' to their command. A recorded tape was played wherein one cleric or the other spoke on how Muslim women were required to dress up, the mode of prayers, the

importance of being a Muslim and the necessity to follow Shariat laws in all affairs of life. We were made to sit for two to three hours without a whisper. No one could move out, come what may. Everybody sat there in silence, listening attentively to the recorded speech. All other religions, especially Indian religions, were denigrated, slandered. It was tortuous to listen in silence to those ugly words. But we did not dare to argue. The consequences were made amply clear. The medicos constitute the intellect of the society and they are filled with hatred for India and her religions. Our batch-mates used to coerce us to embrace Islam. The so-called Jihadis are their heroes. Some of the students would boastfully tell us that such and such commander of HM/HA/LF etc. was his/her elder brother, real brother/cousin etc. I spent those years like a captive in a dungeon full of foul things and foul words. My hostel-mates would tell me that they had already found a suitable husband for me, a brave, smart Muslim boy. Their words would injure me from deep within. My parents constant persuasion and early morning meditation (which I used to do secretly) enabled me to pull along.

After every '*tabligh*' session, I used to cry and call my parents to seek their permission to quit the course.”

KASHMIR DIARY

With moist eyes, her father told me that she was a healthy girl before she joined the Course. We could not imagine what she was going through. The torture she suffered at their hands has reduced her to a skeleton. She weighs hardly 40 Kgs.

It was a startling revelation. The Medical College that I had known was a place of young, intelligent and forward-looking people.

The cab dropped me at Jammu by 9 P.M. It was hot and sultry. The pleasant cool breeze was six hours away at my back.

I had another week to go before proceeding to my place of work. The hot, summer air, frequent power cuts, a chronic shortage of water at Jammu prompted me to make a trip to Sudhmahadeva town, some 100 odd KMs. away. Four of us (my Mom, sister, her son and I) reached the temple town in five hours. The 20 KM stretch of road between Chinaini (on the national highway) and Sudhmahadev took us one and a half hours. Such in the condition of Peerpanchal range roads in the Jammu region.

(To be continued)

A Bird's Eye View of Historicity of Kashmir's Relationship with Bharat - 2

Some portions of ancient Kashmir history are available in Chinese records and the greatest authority on Kashmir Huein Tsang, who visited Kashmir for two years in 631 A D, records that Buddhism was flourishing in Kashmir. Buddhism in that period of history directly connected Kashmir to Bharata.

Buddhism :

Buddhism directly connects Kashmir to Buddha Gaya, as it was in Buddha Gaya (Bihar) that Gautama the son of the ruler of Kapilavastu, King Suddhodana of the Sakya dynasty, achieved enlightenment and became the Buddha.

This religious affinity between the two people is not less significant, as Kashmir became one of the important Buddhist centers to the extent that the fourth Buddhist council organized by the Great ruler Kanishaka was held in Kashmir in about 100 AD.

Kanishaka also links Kashmir with Mathura, the birth place of Lord Krishna. A headless statue preserved in the Museum at Mathura is believed to be that of Kanishaka. Many ruins and remains found in Mathura and preserved in the Mathura Museum are said to be indicating that the Buddhist king was murdered in this area somewhere in the year 150.

It is generally believed that the 'Lotus Sutra' was probably composed in the first century AD, in Kashmir, when the fourth Buddhist Council was held there. The Sutra was composed in the form of a Drama.

Lotus flower today is considered as the symbol of Buddhism. Kashmir grows it in abundance and this flower is also a gift of Lord Krishna to Kashmir. A Puranic legend in this regard is recorded in Rajtarangini (English translation by M A Stein, Chapter iii, SectionVII, page 424).

The Puranic legend says that the lotus (that originally rose from the Naval of Brahma) 'was made to appear in Kashmir by the foot of Lord Krishna when he touched the Mahapadma Naga's head'. May be the Sutra was named as Lotus Sutra for this relevance to Kashmir.

'The Lotus Sutra depicts events that take place in a cosmic world of vast dimensions'. One of the

chapters throws light on the 'Practices that ease the way' to Buddha-hood for the seekers of Nirvana. It forbids association with those dealing with meat cutting and fish hunting. (Abstaining from meat eating is a practice that people of all faiths adhere to in Kashmir even today on some auspicious days and festivals, except the shaivite festival of Shivaratri.)

A stanza from the Lotus Sutra says this:

*'Do not keep company
with butchers, meat-cutters,
Hunters or fishermen,
for they slaughter and slay for gain.....'
'Do not keep company
with those who hawk meat for their living
and those who parade and market people for sex;
do not consort with such ones.'*



Apart from Lord Krishna's and Kanishaka's cementing the link between Kashmir and Mathura, there are many more interactions between the two people. One such link was established by a veteran Kashmiri Vaishnava, Acharya Keshav Kashmiri in the 13th or 14th century when coming from Kashmir he settled in Mathura. He was granted the title of *Digvijaye*, after he performed the tour thrice holding the flag of Nimbakar Sect. His Samadhi is situated at the Narad teela in Mathura.

Apart from this Vaishnavite link, how Kashmir is linked to Bharata through its Trika philosophy or 'Kashmir Shaivism' is known to the world. It is this link that is sought to be broken by those who agitate against the transfer of land to Sri Amaranth Shrine Board.

Kashmir as we know, in the recent past, after (Shaivite) Hinduism resurfaced there, became one of the greatest seats of learning along with Kerala in the south. The interaction between the two people can not be described by a better example than that of Adi Tankard's visit to this land.

It is widely known and authenticated by Saundaryalahari that it was in Kashmir that Sri Shankara composed this *Devi aradhana* (Devotional hymn to mother goddess), after accepting and

recognizing the *Shakti tatva* of Trika Philosophy (Kashmir Shaivism).

There are many folk stories prevalent in Kashmir about the visit of Adi Shankara to that place and his tryst with the Shaktism. All these stories only cement the close cultural bonds between the populace of two regions. One such legend is current about the gift of a head gear that the Shankara sent to a Kashmiri lady who had made him to accept the *Shakti tatva*. The head gear known as Taranga in Kashmir is still used by elderly ladies, with a slight variation as per the religious faith of the people.

Shiva temple situated on the Gopadari hills in the capital city of Srinagar, named as Shankaracharya temple, today stands as a testimony to the visit of Adi Shankara to Kashmir, whose Shashtrath at the famous temple of Sharda is a part of our cultural history. You will be surprised to know that the most common and the most famous hymns in praise of Shakti, the *energy tatva* of Lord Shiva, sung in temples and homes in Kashmir today, is the one produced by the Adi Shankara.

Leela rabdeh sathapit lupta khali lookam

Loka tetar yogi birantar hradya mrigyam

Bala detye shreney samane dutiye punjam

Gaurim ambam ambur hakshim aham yede.

(I pray homage to Gauri, the lotus eyed untained mother of universe, who in her divine play, creates, sustains and dissolves all the fields of experience of life, who is eagerly sought after by yogis in their heart and who shines forth in a flood of soothing radiance like that of numerous morning suns.)

- Translation by Sh. Janki Nath Kaul Kamal

Hari Parbat :

Another place of worship that confirms a close social, cultural and religious link between the people of Kashmir and the land of Bharata is the famous temple of Hari Parvat.

Now before I narrate the folk associated with this place of worship, let me tell you that this place is also known as the Pradyumna Peeth. Rajatarangini also mentions it by the name of Pradyumnagiri and Pradyumnashikhara.

Mr. M.A. Stein in his English translation of Rajatarangini mentions, quoting Somadeva, that the hill is connected with the love of Usha and Aniruddha. From Srimad Bhagavatam we know that Aniruddha was the son of Pradyumna and the grand son of Lord Krishna. He was the first son of Queen Rukmini.

This place that still is a famous Shakti Peetha

of Kashmir has a very interesting folk lore attached to it. It is said that when the Gods were fighting the demon Jalodbhava, the Mother goddess took the form of a Sparrow, known as *HAER* in Kashmiri and carried a big boulder in her beak and dropped on to the demon and crushed him to death. Yet another version of the story narrates that the Mother goddess dropped the boulder to block the mouth of the demons cave and the demon there after could never again surface.

Now what ever the folk lore, the place is associated with Lord Krishna and the other Gods, and in my opinion is a close link between the peoples of the two places.

Yet another historical case study could be the famous Pandav Lareh, the sites of archaeological ruins at many places in the valley of Kashmir that are named after Pandavas and are believed to have been the abode of Pandavas during their wandering in exile. Kashmir's folk and devotional poetry is full of references not only to these places but also to Lord Rama. Many places are ascribed to his name. Even the deity of Mata Khir Bhavani, the Ragnya - principal presiding deity of Kashmir, whose famous temple is at the famous shrine of Tulamulla, is said to have come after lord Rama defeated Ravana.

Brangish Samhita informs us that Ram Bhakta Hanuman brought Shayama from Lanka on his shoulders along with 360 Nagas and in Tulamulla the Devi embodied as Ragnya. Some even worship her as Sita.

Lalituditya Muktapida :

Rajatarangini has a beautiful and vivid description of the images of Lord Vishnu having been installed in a temple at village Suravardhamana in Kashmir (a locality gone into oblivion now).

In verse 265 to 276, Book four, Kalhana narrates how King Lalituditya Muktapida discovered two images of Kesava (Vishnu), which according to the 'letters engraved on the bases showed that these had been made by Lord Rama and Lakshmana'. It was this King Lalituditya, who ruled between 724 and 761 A.D.

Lalituditya Muktapida, the third son of the Karakota king Pratapaditya II, like Alexander the great, desired to conquer the whole world. Backing on his brave and faithful army, he brought Punjab, Kangra and Kanauj under his domain. From (Kanyakubja) Kanauj, he marched eastwards and reduced Jivatagupta, the ruler of Bihar and Bengal, to his vassalage. Continuing his march, he reached the

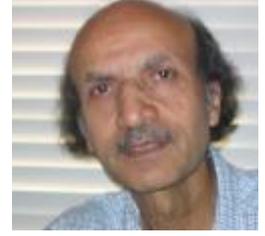
Of Bhagwaans & Babs

I am glad that my poser 'Of Bhagwaans and Babs' has elicited a healthy debate amongst the readers. I must admit I wrote it with much trepidation, expecting a no-holds-barred reaction from the 'faithful'. But it is gratifying to note that we have matured enough to tread the path of civilized discourse on a controversial topic. It gives such a good feeling. I give full credit to the editor Shri M.K.Raina, for throwing the debate open and moderating it, and to all participants for a cogent and coherent advocacy of their points of view through their rejoinders, whether they reinforce my opinion and vote for logic, realism and scientific temper (Dr Raj Nath Bhat) or hold on to the bandwagon of faith even if it may be reciting Sanskrit *slokas* the wrong way (Shri P L Raina), or going a bit further like Ms Anita Dhar, who reiterates the common Kashmiri aphorism '*peer cha bod kine yakeen*' (which is greater - priest/holy man or belief/faith? The 4-page rejoinder by Shri Brij Nath Betab with an elaborate definition of Babs and Bhagwans, an excellent hagiographic exposition in its own right, however does not address the issue I raised about the futility of canonizing ordinary mortals and making them saints.

I can understand the dilemma of Shri Ashok Razdan in failing to make Bab out of his father Baaji Saab even when he half predicted about the outcome of an imminent delivery.

As to predictions, well like numerology, astrology etc, they are still in the grey areas of human understanding and, I feel, we should try to desist from making a Bab out of every soothsayer. Please refer to my write up in "My medical Journey" series 'Does Dress make a difference' in August 2008 issue, where I recall predictions that I made about the death of three of my patients correct to the place and date. They were made on an impulse but that was not to make any claim, even remotely, to being a Bab. As I said, the scientists, philosophers and the logicians, are still investigating the sixth and seventh senses which we all possess to some degree, but are as yet unaware of, just like we never knew about the infra-red and the ultraviolet beyond the spectrum of seven colors of light till they were discovered. But that has nothing to do with spirituality. Let us not confuse these natural endowments in people with spirituality. I do not agree with Shri J L Bhat that

spirituality is more belief and less logic. Spirituality, by definition, is being divine and inspired, concerned with soul and not with external reality. It is refinement, sensitivity, and unconcern for material things, and has nothing to do with blind faith or belief.



If spirituality is having benign looks, beware you may be seduced by the most benignant looking cheat; if it is speaking in subtleties, obliquities and tangents, beware you may be in the thrall of a charlatan, or under the spell of a schizophrenic and you may tend or pretend to make sense out of non-sense to justify your proclivity and predilection for the bizarre and indulge in make-believe to reassure yourself.

And even spirituality or scholarship for that matter esp. in religious dispensation that persons like Swami Laxmanjoo possessed in good measure, does not entitle them to lay claim to being god men or gods and, likewise, does not make them Bhagwans. The Swami was a relation of mine and my patient too and I know how noble and childlike he was, how he groaned with pain like any mortal with an attack of migraine from which he suffered and how he feared death like the rest of us. Yet, he never discouraged fawning devotees (or he had no control on them) making a bash of his birthday which had turned into another KP festival in its own right. And yet, he is worshipped like a Bhagwan; my own mother, his niece, has his picture framed that she worships along with other gods.

If qualities like gentleness, kindness, knowledge, empathy, truthfulness, absences of greed and hatred etc. etc. make a man/woman a god or Bhagwan, then many of you may fit the title. And if we go by the general Christian belief that God made us in his image or the Hindu doctrine of Atma and Parmatma being interlinked and God residing in all of us and we being a part of His total manifestation, then we may be justified in making so many Bhagwans of ordinary mortals.

Let me revert back to astrology, numerology, palmistry etc. and tell you a story. In 1956 my older brother left for England. He was just 17 years. Not many people would cross the ocean those days. Imagine a whole *mohalla* (we were one of the only

two Pandit families in Rajveri Kadal) went to Tourist Reception Center, 10 kilometers away, to give him the most tearful farewell. That is a story apart. Mother was inconsolable at the parting with her first born. Every one was trying to calm her and then came our family priest (Guruji). Someone said to mother, "After all, your son, Chaman, is going just for his degree. Three years will pass like a jiffy and he will be back. Let us ask the Guruji; show him the horoscope."

Guruji had a good look at Chaman's horoscope and, forgetting the sensitivity of a mother in the throes of separation, and true to his job, he declared, "This boy will not return home." That sent a wave of disgust against him. My grandfather, much older than Guruji, burst out, "Are you in your senses, Guruji. Do you realize what are you stating? Will he never return home?"

"I am sorry; of course he will return, but only for a holiday now and then. That is what this horoscope tells me. He will return, but he will go back and marry a *mem* (English girl)."

It was after 6 years that my brother returned first time and then many times, even served in Bombay for a few months, only to return to England, to his lady love, a *mem* no doubt, and made that country his permanent home. Even though he loves his country of birth as never before and dreams and speaks about it more than me, he proved the Guruji right to the last bit of prediction.

Now, our Guruji was no Bab, no Bhagwan, nor made any claims to being one. In fact, he was, I am sorry to admit, a very materialistic person - clever, crafty and even cunning, traits far removed from spirituality - yet he was an acclaimed numerologist. I have seen him being flocked by his *yajmans* (clients) who had a problem. They posed a *prashin* (question). That meant he had to mentally concentrate on your problem from a lead that you provided. Say, you are looking for a match for your daughter and have three choices but can not make up your mind. You pose a question: "Guruji, it is about a girl." He then starts meditating on the question, asks some questions in return to get more leads, say: "Oh it is about marriage?" Naturally, you say, yes. And he meditates again and makes subtle enquiries, goes into deep mental concentration and calculation and slowly unfolds the mystery, even comes to the conclusion that you were in the midst of making a choice and then even leads you on to make it in favor of one or the other.

Now you will ask me how he did it. Is horoscope

reading an art or science, real-time calculation of astronomical forces or an accomplished charlatanry? Is mind reading possible? I cannot answer with any degree of certainty but, all this is possible through an intelligent and analytical approach. For example taking the case of my brother Chaman, it was easy to predict a young man in the most impressionable age, going to a foreign country, and falling in love with a foreigner and as a result adopting that place as his new home. Common sense and the law of probabilities (what you call statistics) go together here. There were examples before of Kashmiris marrying overseas. It is happening now in our forced exodus.

I believe horoscope is just a ruse. And so is the *prashin* thing I mentioned above. By clever leads you can fathom what is going on in the other's mind and even access his/her thought process. Science and psychoanalysis can lead you there. That is how Freud attempted to interpret so many phenomena like human predilections, loves, dreams, slip of tongue, and other aberrations of the mind.

Finally, I am not surprised to get the endorsement of my views from Dr. Romesh Khardoori, a doctor and researcher, one of the bright students that we taught at Medical College, Srinagar who went on to make a mark in the profession. But it is even more gratifying to find another strong proponent of my views in a non-medico in the person of Shri Ravinder Safaya who has been very outspoken and even made bold to introduce 'Bhagwan' Gopinath into the debate. Now, let me acknowledge here I am never impressed by a person with a mind-boggling number of votaries, nor by those innocent sage-like looks, if he smokes a chillum, sits hours and days in front of a *dhoni* doing nothing, not even taking a bath for months and yet 'smelling fine', who pushes the Pakistan army out from the heights of Kargil but fails to stop them in the first instance, and has no authentic claim to miracles or even spirituality. I hope saying so does not hurt the legends of his followers, who, to their credit, have been able to do some great things out of their 'faith' and raise many ashrams round the country and even internationally. I must acknowledge that their enthusiasm arising out of 'faith' has brought people and projects together and I wish them good luck in their constructive pursuits.

I hope by this curtain-raiser we have set the tone for an amicable resolution of our many raging issues through an intuitive and intelligent discourse.

[[

Of Bhagwaans & Babs - Logic & faith

There have been a series of articles, letters and write-ups about 'Babs' and 'Bhagavaans' prompted by an erudite article written by Dr. Chowdhury that have appeared in our magazine. These are thought provoking and interesting. In forming an opinion of our own in this regard we have to keep in mind two things. The first is the latitude that Hindus have to reason out everything and question something that they cannot account for. This latitude is not available to the adherents of other faiths and beliefs. The second is the fact that faith begins where logic and reasoning end. I remember once when the participants of a seminar on Kashmir Shaiva Darshan held in Srinagar called on Swami Laxman Joo, what he told them and I quote 'reasoning will carry you up to a point; beyond that you have to depend on faith.' In other words he established the importance of both intellectual logic and devotional faith.

Having said that, let me make another observation in this regard. The so-called 'godmen' cannot all be put in one category. There are erudite scholars among them, who impart teaching in any discipline of their specialization to their disciples. There are narrators, who are adept in explaining in detail stories from Puranas, Ramayana and Shrimad Bhagwat. There are preachers, who aim at propagating the tenets and principles of Sanatana Dharma. There are sages who have achieved the Supreme Truth after spending years and years in penance. People benefit just by having a glimpse of such persons and by gaining proximity to them. There could be some fake persons (as in any other walk of life) masquerading as 'Sadhus' who try to entice gullible persons by showing fake miracles. As regards some of the real ones showing some miracles these can again be divided into two categories. First the miracles performed to make others believe in them or developing a spiritual frame of mind and second the miracles performed to alleviate the people from their sufferings. The difference is obvious. When I wrote the biography of Bhagavaan Gopinath ji I came across a number of instances of miracles performed by this saint, which were simply to relieve people from their grief and suffering.

As for the importance and usefulness of these pious men and women is concerned, let me narrate

what I read once in the Sunday magazine. The then editor of the magazine M.J.Akber had an interview with Swami Chinmayananda. He asked him about the 'godmen'. The Swami replied, 'I wish there were many more'. Akber asked, 'do you mean to say that they are useful to the society?' Swami ji retorted, 'why do you ask me? Ask the millions who go to them, sit before them and get solace and peace of mind.' Let us not forget that the life is no bed of roses, particularly for those who are poor and downtrodden. If these pious people are in a position to relieve them of their grief and give them some happiness, why not, let them do so. Of course we have to make exception in the case where people are preached in such a way that they turn to be lotus-eaters, fatalists and then become parasites. So long as the advice is in the right direction, inspiring to labour and put in honest efforts and have a reasonable amount of contentment, it is very useful for the society as a whole.

An observation has been made about these pious people themselves suffering physical ailments that needed medical attention. Nothing is wrong or astonishing in this fact. After all when a soul is embodied it has to go through all the properties of the body, changes in the form of growth and decay and the effects of the elements. We cannot expect a saint to hear with his eyes and see with his nose simply because he is a saint. Those who believe in the incarnation of the Divine have accepted Rama's and Krishna's life as the life of any human being. They have also suffered, toiled and undergone changes as any ordinary human being would. Shri Rama Krishna suffered. As Dr. Chowdhury has recorded, Swami Laxman Joo and other saints suffered physical ailments. That does not diminish their greatness and usefulness in any way. Even the human beings have mental, intellectual and spiritual aspects besides the physical aspects.

I had the privilege of attending a seminar at the residence of Shri T.N. Seshan, the then Chief Election Commissioner. It was soon after there was a wide spread occurrence of people offering milk to the idol of Ganesha. The then V.C. of J.N.U, who read his paper in the seminar, ridiculed this episode. Seshan observed, "our intellectuals have a habit of



Mysterious Cave Temple of Shri Amarnath

Legend & History - 2

On the night of the 11th day of the bright fortnight of Sawan (July-August) all pilgrims assemble at Pahalgam. Swami Vivekananda describes the on going pilgrimage as; “The procession of several thousands of pilgrims in far-away cave of Amarnath, nestled in a glacial gorge of the Western Himalayas, through some of the most charming scenery in the world, is fascinating in the extreme. It strikes one with wonderment to observe the quiet and orderly way in which a canvas town springs up in some valley with incredible rapidity at each halting place with its bazaars and broad streets running through the middle and vanishing as quickly at the break of dawn, when the whole army of gay pilgrims are on their march once more for the day. Then again the glow of the countless cooking-fires, the ashes covered Sadhus under the canopy of their large geru (orange) umbrellas pitched in the ground, sitting and discussing or meditating before their dhunies (fire) , the Sanyasis of all order in their various garbs, the men and women with children from all parts of the country in their characteristic costumes, and their devout faces, the torches shimmering at night fall, the blowing of conch-shells and horns, the singing of hymns and prayers in chorus, all these and many other romantic sights and experiences of a pilgrimage, which can be met with nowhere outside India, are most impressive and convey to some extent an idea of the overmastering passion of the race for religion. Of the psychological aspect and significance of such pilgrimage, done on foot for days and days, much could be written. Suffice it to say, that it is one of Amreshvara those ancient institutions, which have above all, kept the fire of spirituality burning in the hearts of the people. One sees here the very soul of the Hindu nation laid bare in all its innate beauty and sweetness of faith and devotion.”

François Bernier was the French physician who accompanied Emperor Aurangzeb to Kashmir in 1663. He has mentioned about cave temple, “a magnificent cave full of wonderful congelations.” Ali Mardan Khan, the Mughal Governor during Emperor Shahjahan’s time, has composed verses in Persian about divinity of Mahesvara.

Pandit Anand Koul, the pioneer of

archaeological research in Kashmir, who carried research regarding the ice-linga inside the cave of Amarnath, made the following observations; “This lingam is not impregnated with any matter, but is composed of simply pure water turned into ice. Nor is it an ice-spring, as some say, for on *Amavas* days the ground in which it stands is found dry. There is, off-course, gypsum in the cave, but it does not form the ingredient of the ice-lingam. This ice-lingam waxes and wanes with the moon, which has been observed by several reliable persons who have stayed at Panchtarni, for a full month and visited the cave from there daily. The phenomenon is considered wonderful by not only Indian scientists, but also by some European scientists who must have been aware of the formation of rock-matters.”

The whole Amarnath pilgrimage procession is conducted under the auspices of Chhari Maharaj. Bringesha Samhita records, ‘that Bringesha Rishi, was once approached by the people, praying to show them the path to salvation.’ The sage advised them to take pilgrimage to cave temple of Amarnath and pray to Shiva Lingam. To ensure safe journey to cave temple, Bringesha Rishi prayed to Lord Shiva, and was graced with Holy mace pair. Ever since this became symbol of protection for the *yatries* and has now taken the form of Chhari- Maharaj—the holy mace, and leads the annual *yatra*. The Chhari generally used to leave after performing the *Puja* at Dashnami Akhara, Srinagar, on the 4th day of the bright fortnight of Sawan. The Mahants who wield the divine command of holy place carry the two holy maces and when the Mahant after the prayers at the cave temple takes his seat a Sadhu holding one of the maces stands on his right and other on his left.

In ancient times, during Hindu rule in Kashmir, the starting point of the pilgrimage to Amarnath was Varmula modern Baramulla. Kashmiris still call it Varmul. But during Muslim rule, lot of restrictions were imposed from time to time, on Hindus for undertaking pilgrimage to various shrines like Gangabal, Harmukh, Amarnath and to other holy places. But devotees of Shiva, in small numbers used to have *Darshan* of Shiva-Linga, even after risking their lives. However, during Sikh rule in

Kashmir, all such restrictions were removed and pilgrimage to Amarnath was restored. The 'Chhari Maharaj' used to start from Amritsar those days. During Dogra rule, the pilgrimage would start from Srinagar and now after the exile of Kashmiri Hindus from the valley, the pilgrimage starts from Jammu.

Cave temple of Sri Amarnath, got never lost nor was re-discovered. Mention of Amreshvara, in Nilmat Purana and Rajtarangini indicates that this *tirtha* was known and worshiped in ancient times. It is believed, that it is more than six thousands years old *tirtha*. There has been regular pilgrimage to Amarnath during Hindu period of Kashmir. Even Muslim chroniclers have documented some interesting features of *Yatra*. Jonaraja has even chronicled the visit of Zain-ul-Abdin, Muslim ruler of Kashmir, to Amarnath.

Nowadays the journey to cave temple, starts from Pahalgam (7500ft). The next halt is at Chandanwari (8500ft), which is ten kilometers away. The old name of the place is 'Sthanu ashrama'. 'Sthanu' is an epithet of Shiva and literally it means 'a pollard'. Lord Shiva sat in *samadhi*, like a pollard in the lap of Himalaya, where 'Deodar' grew. From Chandanwari to Pisu Gathi (12200ft) is steep hill of two kilometers and Seshnag (13148ft) the next halting point is seven kilometers away. The area of Seshnag Lake is twenty five kilometers square. It is fed by the Kohenhar glacier (5178 mtrs.), which looks like hood of a cobra. The milky-water of the lake is just two hundred meters down in a trough-shaped basin. The mountain around Seshnag is covered with snow and it has seven peaks, which resemble the seven heads of mythical Seshnag. From Seshnag to Panchatarni (12230 ft) is about seven kilometers. In between is five kilometers climb, to Maha-gunas, the highest peak in the whole track. The last halting place for pilgrims is Panchatarni. It is a wide plain among the mountain ranges, where five streams flow side by side. Going across these streams there is the sixth stream in which pilgrims perform *Shradha*. Of their dead. From Panchatarni to holy cave (12729ft) is six kilometers.

Lawrence mentions in 'Valley of Kashmir' ; "Pilgrims to Amarnath were joined by Brahmins of Mattan and further up to Batkot the Maliks used to take charge of the pilgrimage."

Another, shorter route is from Baltal, which is situated on Srinagar-Leh highway and is ninety-four kilometers from Srinagar. The road from Srinagar passes through the valley of Sonamarg. The Amarnath shrine is sixteen kilometers from Baltal.

The first three kilometers of the route is simple path. Thereafter, starts the arduous climb of another three kilometers, through pine forests, reaching Brarimarg. From there, it is a downward descent to Sangam, the confluence of the Sind and the Amaravati. Some stretches are very stiff and difficult. Another arduous ascent of about half a kilometer lies ahead. After this, the trek is comparatively easy, and the climb gradual. At 'Neha Nar, pass the route turns to Dardkut, where the pilgrims from Pahalgam route joins it. The pathway follows the right bank of the Amaravati, upto the foot of the cave temple.

Despite the terrorist activities in Kashmir targeting *Yatra* and inclement weather, large number of pilgrims throng to Holy Cave Temple of Sri Amarnath, the abode of Amreshvara, year after year. Off late, two holy shrines, Mata Vaishno Devi in Jammu, and cave temple of Sri Amarnath in Kashmir, draw hundreds and thousands of devotees, from all over the country. This generates lot of revenue for locals. Recently, Government of Jammu and Kashmir, granted some land for making temporary shelters for the *Yatris* en-route to cave temple of Amarnath, especially at base camps of Baltal and Phalgam. This raised lot of resentment from Muslims of Kashmir. Earlier such lands were allotted to Auquaf, at various places in Kashmir, to maintain and construction of Muslim shrines, but no voice was raised against it.

The nine-day long protests across Kashmir were biggest since early 1990, when Kashmiri Hindus were forced to leave the valley. This outrage has put the religious and cultural heritage of Kashmiri Hindus, once again, in danger. The Government withdrew the order of giving land to the Shri Amarnathji Shrine Board, under the pressure of the Muslims of the valley. Hindus of the country, especially of Jammu region, raised their voice against the behavior of the Government, in withdrawing the facilities to be provided to Hindu pilgrims. There has been lot of protests against the decision of the Government through out the country.

The noted columnist Khushwant Singh, wrote in Hindustan Times, dated 19th July 2008; "It is also time to reconsider facilities provided to Muslims going on Haj pilgrimages to Mecca and Medina. Islam clearly provides that only those who can afford to travel to these holy cities should undertake the pilgrimage. Nevertheless, the Government of India provides subsidies to pilgrims who can't pay for their

Continued on Page 21



My Medical Journey

Dr. K.L.Chowdhury



Syndrome of the Exiles (An Evolving Personality Pattern)

Kashmiri Pandits are now in their fifth year of exile. An insidious and well orchestrated programme of marginalization, denial and deprivation in different spheres of civic functioning - social and cultural, political and economic - was launched against the community ever since Jammu and Kashmir changed over from monarchy to 'popular rule' in 1947. Over the years, extremist elements in the populace fanned a cult of hatred and persecution that peaked in the wake of a fanatic upsurge of religious fundamentalism and intolerance in late eighties. Armed militancy and terror followed and changed the paradigm of persecution. Kashmiri Pandits became victims of covert and overt threats to their life, abductions, torture, rape and murder, driving them to seek refuge outside the valley. Scurrilous propaganda accompanied them in their exile, and, as refugees in their own country, they found themselves up against a hostile and tyrannical administration. Even after five years they are battling for sustenance, security and shelter in the face of insurmountable obstacles, harassment and humiliation from all sides. The meager relief of Rs. 250/- per head per month which now has been raised to Rs. 375/- does not come easily and they have to wait long hours in the sun, and face the ire of corrupt officials. The tents are torn, tattered rags. Medicare is in name only. Children and youth are facing untold hardships in their growing up and education. Qualified young men and women are jobless. Traders, orchard-owners and professionals have been rendered defunct because of loss of assets and opportunities. Sick people are dying from lack of resources and care. Older people are counting

their days of misery, waiting for final redemption.

A community which has, by and large, been conscientious and hard working to the extent of being labeled as mulish; which was supportive to all, obedient to authority and loyal to rules to the extent of being dubbed servile; which was docile, friendly, accommodative and non-violent in the face of provocation - qualities which were construed as weakness and cowardice - was suddenly thrown into a cataclysm of unforeseen magnitude, wreaking havoc with its sensibilities and psyche.

It is a tribute to the fortitude, resilience, and the versatility of Pandits that they have not fallen on evil ways in the face of crises, not taken to violent means to seek revenge for the genocide, not even harbored hatred for their persecutors, but are fast moving on and trying to adapt to the changed, albeit insalubrious, milieu in which they find themselves. They have remained disciplined and law abiding to the core and are facing with courage and dignity the terrible consequences of lost havens, lost jobs and lost identities. Idleness has been a huge challenge but young boys and girls have not sunk into sloth but gone out whole hog in the search for avenues of self employment. Exile has been a leveler of sorts and many social aberrations are disappearing fast. As a result, dignity of manual labour has dawned upon the community which no longer feels compunction in taking up any type of job - be it running a pavement shop outside INA market in New Delhi, a vending of cloth on foot or on bicycle, and even fish-mongering in Jammu. In the process, there has been a wide scatter leading to breaking down of large families into smaller, harder-to-sustain, units. As a result a sense of deep insecurity has grown, getting deeper with the dwindling hope of an early return to Kashmir, as more and more of the property left behind by the community is being looted, vandalized and firebombed in the valley or sold for a song. The qualified professionals, technocrats, scientists and scholars have been made redundant due to the criminal neglect of the State and Central Govt. and



Dr. K.L.Chowdhury is a renowned physician and neurologist, based at Jammu. He has very kindly, not only agreed to write permanently for the 'Health' column of 'här-van', but also volunteered to answer health-related queries from the readers. We invite readers to send their queries to the editor 'här-van' at editorharvan@yahoo.co.in to be passed on to Dr. K.L.Chowdhury, or send them directly to Dr. Sahib at kundanleela@yahoo.com

are wasting away. No doubt, in spite of their adaptive traits, a deep sense of pessimism is seeping in the collective psyche of the community. The premises and perceptions, the outlook and thinking, the beliefs and value systems are undergoing a sea change. A new personality pattern is evolving.

It is this constellation of evolving changes in the personality which includes the psychological, intellectual, emotional and physical characteristics and behavior of the community over the last five years in exile that manifests in, what I call, the 'Syndrome of the Exiles.' It exteriorizes, from time to time as a loss of confidence, a paucity of thought, reduced initiative, lack of energy and drive, failing intellect, lapses in memory, easy fatigability, dwindling physical strength, waning sexual drive and, sometimes, with loss of interest in life, apathy, despair and lassitude and at other times as a feeling of worthlessness, loss of self esteem and even guilt and remorse at having left Kashmir. Negativism and withdrawal dominate the picture in some, while belligerence, argumentativeness and aggression in others. Suspiciousness, skepticism, loss of faith and belief, and fatalism color the psychic mosaic from time to time.

Add to this picture the mannerisms which range from enfeebled voice and dull monotone in speech, a haunted look, a helpless shrug of the shoulders, a twitch of the facial muscles, and a hesitant and stooping posture, to involuntary gesticulations, self talking and absent-mindedness and you get some idea of the syndrome. Mind you, I am not touching in any detail here the psychiatric fallout of terrorism on the community like anxiety syndromes, nightmares, panic attacks, phobias, depressions, post-traumatic stress disorder, psychosis etc. which have seized the community in epidemic proportions. In fact, the evolving syndrome of exiles is the collective result of the physical, psychological and mental trauma to which Pandits have been exposed over the years before, and the insult to injury after their exodus.

As long as we continue to be refugees, as long as we continue to face denial and deprivation, as long as we are the victims of persecution, as long as our fundamental rights as equal citizens are denied to us and we are made to feel like pariahs, as long as the scatter gets wider and wider, we are in danger of a total metamorphosis. That will be the time that Kashmiri Pandit will become extinct in psycho-morphological parlance. And it will be a terrible tragedy. Can we stem the rot?

Jammu – 14th February, 1994

Post script – We have certainly stemmed the rot. We have passed the fire test and fought off the aberrations in the personality that had crept in during the immediate aftermath of exodus and emerged tough mentally and psychologically. We have evolved into a strong and vibrant community, confident of the present and hopeful of the future.

[[

A Correction

Dr. Chowdhury's write-up in the September 2008 issue of 'här-van' should read as '**Concealed Haemorrhage or Heart Attack**' and not '**Concealed Haemorrhage of Heart Attack**'. Error is regretted.

Mysterious Cave Temple ... Contd. from Page 19

expenses and sends official delegations of Muslims free of charge to Saudi Arabia. There is no justification whatsoever for its doing so...."

Temples, Dharamshalas, lands attached to various shrines and cremation grounds of Kashmir, need to be surveyed and properly documented. Earlier, surreptitious process of changing the revenue records, were put into motion to regularize the misappropriation of the temple lands. Glaring illustrations of such misappropriation of temple lands are;

- (i) The misappropriation of huge tracts of land belonging to the Kheer Bhawani shrine at Tulmul.
- (ii) The misappropriation of huge tracts of land located at the foot of the stairs of the Chakarshwar shrine at Hari Parbat in Srinagar, spreading round compound of Seda-Peeth.
- (iii) The vast tract of temple land attached to the Maharajini spring at Patan, misappropriated for the construction of a government school building and a Panchayat Ghar.

A process of documentation, on above mentioned subject is being carried out. Lot of information has been collected. Still there is scope for further up-to-date. Any such data or related information is welcome.

[Author is Chairman, Vidya Gouri Gadoo Memorial Trust, 71, Sunder Block, Shakarpur, Delhi 110092. Tel: 22547672]

]]]

Jnana Yoga (The Path of Knowledge)

[Saddhak is the pen name of Shri Piyaray Raina . Shri Raina is President of Samarpan Public Charitable Trust (Regd) which among other things is involved with bringing awareness of our cultural heritage among our youth. He is a regular contributor of religious articles in various community journals in India and abroad. He is the author of book 'Socio-Cultural and Religious Traditions of Kashmiri Pandits' published in USA. He lives in Atlanta, USA and DLF Gurgaon, India]



We have already discussed Karm Yoga and Bhakti Yoga the two paths out of three paths for gaining the state of moksha .In this instalment we will discuss Jnan Yoga which is also known as the path of knowledge .

A jnan yogi has to be involved in the continuous study, continuous meditation, logical and psychological and other thinking, introspection, etc . All these things should be mastered by him without losing his balance. Things of outside world should not disturb his peace . He should be able to control his mind and heart in such a manner that whatever may happen, he should remain unaffected, unperturbed, unruffled.

Bhagwad Gita (chapter 2 shalokas 54 -72) defines *Brahma-jnani* . as a person of wisdom, who has the following attributes :

- 1)He has abandoned all his desires of heart(2/55)
- 2)His mind is not disturbed by adversity(2/56)
- 3)Who is unattached everywhere (2/57)
- 4) Who is not a slave of sense objects (2/58)
- 5)Whose mind is tranquil and anchored in equilibrium(2/65)
- 6) who is above the feeling of I and Mine. Who is above all forms of *ahankar* (2/71)

The path of knowledge involves the use of meditative concentration, preceded by a long and systematic ethical and contemplative practice of *yoga* to gain a supra-intellectual insight into one's identity with *Brahman*.

Raj Yoga (also known as *Ashtange Yoga* – the *yoga* of eight limbs or steps) describes various yogic practices for those who seek this path of liberation. This form of *yoga* is described in detail in *Yoga sutras* written by *Patanjali*. Eight steps or limbs of this *yoga* are:

- 1) *Yama* (restraint) – It includes five ethical and moral disciplines:

- i) *Ahimsa* (restraint from violence)

- ii) *Satya* (restraint from false hood)
- iii) *Asteya* (restraint from stealing)
- iv) *Brahmacharya* (restraint from sex)
- v) *Aparigraha* (restraint from greed of wealth)

- 2) *Niyama* (observances/ discipline) – The five *niyamas* (disciplines) are:

- i) *Shaucha* (cleanliness of body and purity of mind)
- ii) *Santosha* (contentment)
- iii) *Tapasya* (austerity)
- iv) *Svadhya* (Scriptural study)
- v) *Ishvara-prani-dhana* (surrender to god).

- 3) *Asana* (posture or seat) – A suitable body posture is to be maintained e.g. *Padmasana*, *Svastikasana* etc.

- 4) *Pranayama* (breath control) – It involves series of breathing exercises to ensure smooth breathing during meditation.

- 5) *Pratyahara* (sense withdrawal) – It involves practice by which mind is withdrawn from sense perceptions to get focused on one thought alone.

- 6) *Dharana* (concentration) – Focusing of mind on one thought through a picture of deity, a *mantra* etc.

- 7) *Dhyana* (meditation) – It is a state of mind when thoughtlessness prevails spontaneously without making much effort. There are three methods by which it can be achieved:

- i) Direct method when thoughts are directed towards an object such as a symbol of deity, a picture or just a *mantra*.
- ii) Indirect method by observing one's own breathing or going through ones own thoughts without getting involved in them.
- iii) Inquiry method by making the body and mind still, motionless and thoughtless.

Continued on Page 26

Diwali - A Hindu Festival (A Journey from darkness to Light)

Introduction :

An Indian festival popularly known by the name Diwali is celebrated by the millions of Indians around the globe to propitiate the Goddess of wealth, progress and prosperity in the traditional religious manner, by lightning the clay made lamps known as Diya. This celebration brings the message of mutual love and respect for religious harmony. Diya provides light in the darkness of night irrespective of religious affiliation and denomination, but creates a good will among all the communities through this festival of lights.

Essence of Diwali :

Tamsor-ma-jyotir-gamaya is journey from darkness to light. A man of the spiritual temper thanks the Rigvedic Rishi in giving an aphorism of three words in the complete Sanskrit sentence of Tamsor Ma Jyotirgamaya. It means from darkness to light Linguistically, it is a fifteen syllabled Mantra dedicated to Maha Lakshmi, corresponding to the Kadi Mantra of the Shakti tradition of India. (1)

The fifteen syllable Mantra is very auspicious for peace, progress and prosperity, according to the Shaktivad. Shaktivad is the Shakti tradition of India, placing the Divine Mother as the nucleus of creation. It is also revered as Srishti and Prakriti in the Ratri Suktam of the Vedas. This Mantra is Vedic in language, Yogic in spirit and Upanishadic in content. Tamas means darkness, inertia, ignorance and illusion, while Jyoti is light, flame and illumination. Tamas is evil in man, but Jyoti is the spirituality within the recesses of a human being. The Mantra carries the great significance in understanding the Divinity manifested around the world. (2)

Deepa / Deepak is a Sanskrit word, which means Diya in Hindi language. In the Bhojapuri Hindi, it is known as Diwa, which means an earthen lamp or lamp made from clay. Avali means a range, a series, a string in Sanskrit language. Thus the Deepavali/ Diwali is the series of Diyas or earthen lamps offered to Shri Lakshmi on the specific day, which is popularly known as the Diwali. It is observed at the Sandhya/ twilight hours of the dusk at the proper Muhurta or auspicious hour. (3)

Why earthen lamps? The soil of the mother earth is considered as the sacred element,

according to the Puranas and Tantras. This has been established by the Vedas, claiming the earth planet as Prithvi Mata. (4)

The wick of the lamp is termed as Vartika in Sanskrit. It is made of pure cotton, giving a twig shape of two whirls representing Purusha and Prakriti, with the base of Absolute Brahman, which is pure Sattva or emancipation. The cotton should be without any stain and giving it the shape of Shiva - Shakti in unison. The Lalita Sahsrnama endorses that Shiva Shakti is Eka Rupini. It affirms that by the will of Shiva, the Supreme Shakti becomes One with Shiva. (5)

That is Eternal Light and revered as Prakash according to the Tantras and Trika Shasana/ Siddhanta of Kashmir school of religious thought. (6)

The third ingredient that is needed is Ghee or clarified butter, and no oil is to be used. The source of Ghee is the milk from the cow, which is considered the sacred animal with the status of a mother in the Hindu religion, by the followers of the Sanatana Dharma. Thus broadly speaking, a trio of soil-cotton-ghee is necessiated to make the Deepak or Diya or Diwa illumining on the Diwali day. (7)

When the Deepak/ Diya is to be purchased?

The tradition recommends the Ashvin Purnima, which is full moon day, fifteen days prior to Diwali to purchase the Diyas. If it is not possible for any reason, then on any day barring the Dhanishta nakshatra/ not good constellation of five days, according to the astrological definition, as given in the Puranas. (8)

The eldest woman of the family is supposed to soak the Diya in water, till it absorbs water, lest the Diya should absorb the Ghee. The Diya need to be illumining for a considerable time of the night. The icon or a picture or a golden coin of Lakshmi is purchased on the Dhan Teras day. DhanTeras is the Apbramsha word for Trayodashi. The 13th Tithi/ Hindu system of calendar date is Trayodashi or the 13th digital moon. It is considered as the auspicious date for purchasing of the utensils for the kitchen. Dhan means wealth. Prosperity, good fortune. Lakshmi deity is associated with wealth. Since the day is dedicated to Shri Lakshmi, orthodox Hindus generally observe



a fast on this Amavasya day. Amavasya is the no moon day in Sanskrit language. (9)

The Halwa, Puri, and sweet dishes made from wheat are prepared in the home. Batasha/ Patasha is purchased from the confectioner. Sweets are purchased from the Mishthan shop or sweets shop. Diwali is always observed on the Swati/ chitra, constellation, because the Diwali falls on the Swati/ Chitra Nakshatra/ constellation of the full dark night in the month of Kartika Amavasya , corresponding to the late September or early October. It is a collective celebration. (10)

Anna Kuta and Govardhana Puja/ worship is followed by the Bhai Dooj. Anna Kuta is for the commencement of the harvest . Govardhan Puja is for the promotion of the cattle wealth. The Diwali celebration is related to the second Purushartha/ yearnings known as Artha/ earning of wealth among the four Purushathas of Dharma,Artha, Kama , Moksha. In modern idiom, the Diwali is a celebration of human resource associated with financial management within a home and enlarging its boundaries to a community ,thus focusing its application to the welfare of society. (11)

Diwali is followed by the Bhai Dooj, when a sister prays for the welfare, long life and prosperity for her brother/brothers , in their new establishment and for maintaining the sacred relationship of brother and sister to see the society flourish for the higher values of life. The Bhai Dooj is post-Vedic celebration,as the term in itself suggests. The Bhai Dooj word is the Hindi word and not the Sanskrit word.

Puranik Puja of the Diwali :

The Bija Mantra is the seed-syllable or the mystic alphabets of the Puranas. Every deity has got its own Bijaksharas.

The Bija Mantra of the Maha Lakshmi runs as:
 "Om Asya Shri Maha Lakshmi Mantrasya Chavana
 Rishi
 Anushtup Chhanda
 MahaLakshmi Devata Shrim Bijam Hrim Shakti Om
 Kilakam
 Om Shram Om Shrim." (12)

The English translation runs as:
 Chavana is the Rishi of this Mahalakshmi Mantra. The Meter of this Mantra is of four lines of eight syllables each . The Devi is the Maha Lakshmi,. The Spiritual seed is Shrim within the potency of Hrim Shakti. The nailing of this Mantra lies in Shram Shrim. This is how to invoke the Lakshmi, who is great and auspicious with all the attributes of prosperity, peace and mental equipoise. This leads

to the mystical interpretation of the Diwali celebrations. (13)

Diwali can be loosely translated as the festival of lights. The houses, shops, are illumined. The Atashb/azi firecrackers/fire works are being played. After Diwali Puja celebration, sweets are partaken known as the Prasad and distributed among the friends, relatives, neighbors. It has retained the social recognition as well. Friends and well wishers send greetings in exchange. It is more of the exchange of mutual love, brotherhood and interaction between different religious denominations The general way of greeting is "Diwali ki Badhai" or "Shubha Diwali" or "Diwali Abinandan or Sita Ram". People hug one another sharing mutual love, affection and for confidence building. The married daughter of any age gets a Saree, some cash and sweets from the parents. Young ones put on new frocks,shirts and generally a new dress is purchased to celebrate the occasion. Some purchase the gold coin, if gold is not possible they may purchase a silver coin and put it in their safety valet. (14)

People purchase a silver icon of Lakshmi and put in in their Puja room/ a sanctified place or the place assigned near a kitchen for the purposes of keeping sanctity. Those who can not afford that icon or Shri Yantra , which is the AGAMIC representation of Lakshmi, purchase a picture of Shri Lakshmi and offer flowers ,incence, Diya, unbroken rice, banana and recite the Bhajans dedicated to Lakshmi. The Devi is offered red flowers. The Sindoor/ vermilion is applied as the Tilkam on the forehead and on the Devi's Murti/ icon. (15)

The sixteen step Puja is still current in some orthodox families and in the big temples around the globe. Some recite the Lakshmi Sahsrnama, a thousand sacred words dedicated to the deity but a learned Pandit alone can do that. Puja. The Viniyoga / ritualistic deliberation of the Puja need to be done with the help of any Pandit, according to the Hindu tradition. (16)

The Lakshmi has been adored with eleven names of 'Shri Chapala, Shri Chanchala, Shri Kamala, Shri Katyayani, Shri Jaganmata, ShriVishva Vallabha, Shri Kamala vasini, Shri Padmanana, Shri Kamala Patraksha, Shri Shriya and Shri Maha Lakshmi.' All these characteristics of Lakshmi is that wealth is always fluctuating. It changes with respect to time,place and situation. Proper distribution of wealth is the essence to see the society flourishing in every endeavor. These eleven names of the Divine Lakshmi suggest the fair distribution of the

resources and assets. (17)

Shri means auspiciousness. It is the beauty of soul and the rhythm of life, Shri Maha Lakshmi is the Yajurveda in form, according to the Markandeya Purana. To adore Shri Maha Lakshmi in the Shri Yantra is Tantrik in practice, but to adore Her in Murti of Lakshmi is Puranik in character, to offer fire Ahutis/ oblations in the Agnihotra is the Vedic way of invoking the Divine Mother in the form of Shri Maha Lakshmi. (18)

The quintessence of the Diwali can be summed up in the following couplet

“Lakshmi comes out to meet the soul of the world
Her spirit comes through the unknown depths,
She makes the universe her instrument of wealth,
For me and for all she is the eternal strength.”

The function of celebrating the Diwali has been in practice since the Ramayana period, Shri Rama arrived after the exile of fourteen years to his home town Ayodhya after giving the crushing defeat to the Rakshasa/ evil in the form of Ravana, and finally killing him along with his brothers and sons, except Vibhishana. It was the Dusshera day, one day after Nava Ratra, dedicated to the Divine Mother. Then the well wishers, the citizens of Ayodhya gave a reception to Shri Rama and his consort Sita Devi, who is considered as the very incarnation of the Earth planet, by the Hindus; on this auspicious day. At the time of Sandhya, the whole of Ayodhya, was illuminated with Deepaks. Thus Diwali came in prominence in Hinduism. (19)

Diwali in Hindu Diaspora :

In the Hindu communities around the globe, this festival of light is observed with dedication and determination to keep the future generation abreast with the ancient heritage of India. The Diyas have taken the place of candles and mostly the oil lamps are used instead of ghee Diyas, to illumine the windows, fencing, doors around their residential houses in India or the Caribbean countries and in the Hindu Diaspora. But the “Ghee Ka Diya” is still current to wave or offer before the Deity Lakshmi in the temples. No MOM BATI/ wax candle is offered to the Deity in Indian temples but the electric illumination has become a part of system in the temple culture now. People prefer to illumine their houses with colorful electric bulbs in the urban areas. All the streets, pathways, business establishments are illumined to turn the dark night into the festival of light to please the Lakshmi, who is the Goddess of wealth and prosperity. The house hold women decorate the kitchen with the oil Diyas. Diya or Diwa

is the essence of Deepawali. Because of the linguistic changes Deepavali has taken the generic name of Diwali.

To sum up, Diwali is religious festival of the Hindus. The experience of values are observed on the soil of India as this celebration touches the human psyche for attaining progress and prosperity. By an examination of given facts, it constructs a theory of Artha on the broader canvas of Dharma, which has logical consistency and empirical reality. It is a perpetual movement of events, which bring society very close to religion in the Hindu way of life.

References :

1. Siboo Jaggan Nath, 'Kashmir Shakta Vimarsha' chap. Kadi Vidya, pub, Shakti Prakash Kendra Kashmir, India. 1989
2. Saraswati Shri Brahmananda, 'Supersonic and Ultrasonic Music, pub, Baba Bhagavandas Publication Trust, Monroe, NY
3. Jyotishi Dr M M, 'Vijayeshvara Jantri' 2003-04p. 148
4. Prithvi Sukta of the Atharva Veda, hymn 12.9-14
5. Sastry R Ananthakrishna, English rendering Bhaskarray's Sanskrit commentary, pub: The Adyar Library and Research Center, Madras, India
6. Pandey Dr Kanti Chanra, 'Indian Aesthetics Vol1, p 94, 97, 102
7. Hindu Sanaskriti Anka of Gita Press Gorakhpur, India No 24, 1950, p 607
8. — ibid—, based on the chapters 182-86
9. Survey by the author at Kashmir and Rajasthan.
10. Ed. Louis Renou, 'Hinduism' p 34 George Braziller, Inc NY 1961
11. A talk given by Dhamma Priya B.S. Sahwal, editor Madhyama Pratipada Indological Journal at Ajmer, India on the occasion of Diwali 1999
12. Ed Jyotishi Keshav Bhat,; Mantraatma Karma Kanda, Vol iii, Mantra related to Shri Larksome, Nirvana Sager Press, Mumbai 1936
13. English translation by the author on the reference 12
14. Based on popular Hindu traditon
15. Raina Chaman Lal, 'Facets of Shri Chandi Nava-Durga', Chapter-The procedure of Navarna, Sharda publishing House 2004
16. A learned Pandit in the Scriptures can perform the Viniyoga of the Shakti tradition, as it is occult, read with the Nitya Karma Puja Prakash ed. Mishra Shri Ram Bhavan Ji, Pub, Gita press Gorakhpur 1996
17. Amar Kosha Sanskrit dictionary.
18. Raina Chaman Lal, The Goddesses of India, chapter 5, Module for UG Students, at FIU
19. A popular belief among the believers that Diwali was introduced after Rama's coronation, when the evil Ravana was killed. Chaitanaya Bharati, pub: Vishwa Hindu Parishad of America, Inc. Special Publication 2005. P 95

[[

Reflections

T.N.Bhan

Pledge

One night I had a dream. I dreamt that I was walking along the bank of river Jhelum with my dear uncle Bhaisaheb. Across the sky flashed the scenes from my life. For each scene, I noticed two sets of footprints on the marshy bank. One belonging to my uncle and the other to me. We two were walking hand in hand, side by side. Looking back at the footprints, I noticed that many times along the path of life, there were only one set of footprints. I also realised that it happened at the very lowest moments of my life. This really upset me and I questioned my uncle about this. It was then that Bhaisaheb uncle replied, "My precious child, I love you and I would never leave you during your times of trial and tribulations. You should not forget that I carried you in my lap on your yegneopavit day, which is the most momentous day in the life of a Kashmiri Pandit. By doing so, I made a pledge to Lord Brahma, the Creator, promising eternal protection and care to you. I have never broken that pledge. So I have carried you through difficult times of life and shall do so endlessly."



(Inspired by the passage 'Footprints', author anonymous)

Let God Do The Rest

As a child I had no broken toys to mend as I did not possess any toys like other children.

As I grew up, I brought my broken dreams to God, because He happened to be my best friend.

But then, instead of leaving Him in peace, to work alone, I remained near Him and tried to assist Him with my own ways.

At last, I lost patience and snatched my broken dreams back and cried,

"How can you be so slow?"

God replied: "My dear child, what could I do? You never did let go."

]]]

Jnana Yoga

... Contd. from Page 22

Whenever a thought occurs in such state, one has to direct it towards "who am I?"

8) *Samadhi* (absorption in god) – This is the ultimate goal of person who indulges in *Raja yoga*. In this state the practitioner is in a super conscious state of mind and is one with god. There are two forms of *samadhi*:

- i) Conscious *Samadhi* – Practitioner achieves certain super natural powers (*siddhis*) in the form of clairvoyance, mind reading, thought transmission etc.
- ii) Super conscious *samadhi* – It is super conscious state of mind in which a direct relationship with god is achieved. In this state one can maintain either subject-object relationship with god (*sarvikalpa samadhi*) or end subject-object relation with god (*nirvikalpa samadhi*) and become one with him.

Hatha Yoga is a branch of *Raj Yoga*, which includes first four steps only. It is very popular *yoga* for control of breath.

Lord Krishna Himself describes *Jnan Yoga* as superior to all other paths :

Knowledge sacrifice (*Jnan Yoga*) O scorcher of foes (Arjuna) is superior to wealth sacrifice (i.e *Karma Yoga*). All karma in its entirety, O Partha ,culminates in knowledge (4/33)

The rewards of *jnan yoga* are many .

- 1) A *jnan yogi* sees himself as a part of the Lords' creation and thus does not fall into any confusion about the purpose of his life(4/35)
- 2) Even if one is most sinful of all sinners ,yet shall he cross over all sins by the raft of knowledge(4/36)
- 3) As the blazing fire reduces fuel to ashes, so does the fire of knowledge reduce all *karma* to ashes (4/37)
- 4) There is no purifier in this world like knowledge (4/38)
- 5) A man of *sradhha*, the devoted, the master of his senses obtains knowledge. Having obtained that knowledge he promptly lives in Peace Supreme.

[[[

Fiction

B.L.Dhar

The Celestial Meeting

All the gates in the heaven were open today. The mood was somber. The weather was fine. The setting sun shone through patches of dissipating cloud and a mild breeze was blowing, lifting the ambience a few notches higher. Bright colors danced in myriad ways across the horizon painting geometrical designs. The nature was at its organizing best to jazz up the spirits of all the heavenly inmates so that the following moments are used in their best performance. A long table was set up and arrangements made to seat at least a thousand souls. Long necked silver flasks carrying nectar were placed on the table and tall crystal glasses lay in front of each chair. Trays full of delicious fruit of a hundred varieties were placed alongside and freshly baked bread in oval shaped baskets adorned the rest of the space. A mild fragrance of various flowers mingled in a frenzy of heady cocktails that swooned everyone around. Long curtains of silk flowed alongside the doors and fluttered in the mild breeze. Soft notes of musical instruments wafted along the breezy waves of air that smelt so heady and fragrant. A look overhead gave access to the blue domed sky adorned with twinkling stars. A host of bright white winged angels floated around the venue carrying feather fans of various colors. With a few gestures of their hands, sparks of color flew around leaving starry patterns floating around.

At the stroke of midnight, when the moon was directly above and the sun god had finally decided to park his chariot on the other side, a crescendo of voices began to be heard along the slopes leading on to the gates. Within minutes a throng of colorfully attired gods appeared entering the gates and noisily seated themselves in the chairs in front of the long table. The gentlemen gods were seen with their ladies and consorts and whispering loudly to each other so as to be heard. Their faces conveyed a bit of concern that this meeting was called up at short notice. Such short notice meetings were usually a matter of grave concern for everyone. The gods had to have a clean chit as regards their own departments and could be asked to explain any shortcomings for which they had to pay dearly if found wanting in any respect. Some gods were even punished with banishment from heaven to serve a period of service in the mortal world below amongst the ordinary living mortals. This would mean living a full span of life among the mortals and then return after facing the death god. This was a painful experience that they did not want to happen at any time. During such stints in the mortal world some could even be recalled at short notices leaving their life half lived and their mortal friends and relatives in grief. The worst part of it was that during this sojourn in the mortal world they were not allowed to remember anything of their celestial status.

Shortly all the chairs were occupied signaling a full attendance and all eyes were now looking up at the head of the table where three chairs were placed. These were high backed ornamental chairs decorated in ornate gold brocade and placed at a slightly higher elevation so that all eyes could directly see its occupants. Soon a conch shell sound in a loud pitch was heard signaling the arrival of the celebrity. Firstly three senior gold winged angels arrived and placed themselves right behind the high backed chairs. Then they announced the arrival of Gods:

**B.L.Dhar**

Born at Srinagar, Shri B.L.Dhar did his post graduation in Mathematics and took up a job in the Central Government in the Aviation Sector. He retired as Senior Aerodrome Officer in 1989 from the office of the Director General of Civil Aviation and joined the newly constituted PSU, Airports Authority of India (AAI) from where he retired as a General Manager in 2000.

As a corporate entity, the AAI decided to host an in-house magazine where Shri Dhar contributed articles related to Aviation activity throughout his stay with them. Sadly the magazine closed down soon after his retirement as the entire editorial board retired from its service. Since then, Shri Dhar has been writing on subjects that affect the daily life of an ordinary Indian Citizen and his articles, mostly in the form of short stories or essays are published by various magazines.

Shri Dhar got detached from his roots very early in life and remembers very little of his life as a young man in Kashmir. He lives currently at New Delhi, but move over to Europe and USA a lot as he has his kith and kin spread all across the world.

“Brahma”, “Vishnu” and “Mahesh” and bowed their heads in reverence as the Gods arrived and seated themselves at the head of the table. There was a hushed silence all over and not a soul stirred as the Gods surveyed the scene in front and were convinced of total attendance. The Angels gave a call for prayer and soon small children appeared as if on a cue from all over the arena and encircled the gathering. In the backdrop of soft music the prayers of the heaven were recited by the children that lasted for almost a half hour. The song was mainly verses praising the Gods and invoking a blessing from them that the celestial souls be granted peace. Prayers done, the children floated out in all directions and soon the angels announced the beginning of the meeting. Brahma - the creator, Vishnu - the protector, and Mahesh - the destroyer spoke in the order of their seniority and at length delved into the subject of today's meet.

BRAMHA: You all know that the world was created as a means to accommodate the souls at one place. They were asked to live in harmony and respect for each other. That there be a fair ground for each species to live and survive and at the end of their term show up for an assessment of their lives. Those who qualified in all the parameters of life were open to stay back in the heavens and become a part of you all. This practice has been going on from one yug to the other and found tenable. Among the souls we placed a species, called humans, in our own image and caliber. They are blessed with the prowess to think and protect the others who have a lesser degree of mental balance and analysis.

VISHNU: As long as the species was allowed to live in the world after a creation by Lord Brahma, it was incumbent upon me to ensure that I look after their fair survival and be their protector. That they do not falter in their design was time and again warned by sending you as angels and apostles of faith so that they remain in touch with the reality of life and proof of the existence of God. Most of them responded well but there were instances when this order was dislodged and faith was overcome by fear. What we now see is that the human, left there by design as a model protector of other species, has now turned out to be more of an animalistic creature than the so called animals themselves.

MAHESH: I have to intervene in the scheme of things and identify the guilty and punish them for their misdeeds. I have been of late very busy offering

punishments as the violations continue to rise. I see a pattern emerging that requires a speedy correction. A reign of terror is let loose by some bad souls and it has been observed that the guidelines are manipulated to create chaos and confusion in the minds of the earth souls. Those who are pure also get in the cog mire of malice and get stained. This is a gross violation of the basic principals of life and very much demand a correction. This, my fellow heaven souls, is the reason why this meeting is called to order to find a lasting solution.

At the outset we have to debate the performance of the earth souls, which has been reported as dismal. We have concluded that this could be corrected in two ways. One where the whole earth species is annihilated and a new one created. This would be an unscheduled and early end of “Kalyug” and the beginning of another “yug” that would stand on the principals of purity. Second alternative is to give another chance to the earth souls to correct themselves and their behavior so that all of them live in perfect harmony.

Now we need not effort much to take a recourse to the first option. The earth will be destroyed by MAHESH in a manner befitting the present incumbents. The whole earth species will be annihilated including the wicked humans. BRAHMA will then create a whole new world that will initially be inhabited by pure souls from amongst you who are presently living here in the heavens. We may have to send all of you first to start a whole new world and you will be recalled after the human species is once again established afresh. We shall take a look at the design and form of the other species and evolve these in such a manner that a coexistence is ensured.

The second option of reform is a bit tricky in the sense that we have to send an emissary from here in the guise of a god man who will try change the mindset of the earth souls and if successful spare the destruction of the species altogether. The only difficulty here is that the earth souls will consider this god figure as kind of a new religion and start the sectarian wars all over again. We have had this experience already in the last millennia when we sent several gods on purifying missions and ended up with the crises of manifold faiths springing up as a result. The human mind is getting into intricate maladies with new concepts taking over. Scientific knowledge is being put to an uncomfortable use with the discovery of new means of warfare. Tools of war are routinely created and tested upon each other. The uninvolved earth souls do not register a protest.



B.L.Dhar in Berlin

We would definitely have heard and made amends and punished the guilty. The humans have made progress in the field of medicine but they manipulate the heavenly designs by even permitting marriage of two souls of the same sex. They forget this is a mental imbalance requiring a correction rather than it being a moral right. The laws of nature relating to the field of procreation are grossly violated. We have warned them with the creation of diseases like AIDS but sexual malpractices are rampant all across the globe. They try create souls in the laboratory which by nature is a function governed by our ideology and concept of the balancing of species. The humans are becoming more indifferent in comparison to animals that have blissfully maintained the laws.

In short we have to take a decision today as to what form of punishment is practical. Your vote in this regard will greatly help us in reaching a safe conclusion. So at the close of your meal you will please leave your vote at the exit gates and we shall be amply rewarded with your decision. BRAHMA, VISHNU and MAHESH bless you all and promise that your wishes will be respected. Today's meeting stands concluded.

The sun started its journey again through the skies and the soft rising rays touched the feet of the trinity Gods, BRAHMA, VISHNU and MAHESH. They just concluded the count of the votes and with a sigh of relief looked at the dispensation given by the celestial gods to the earth souls once again. The decision was unanimous that the earth souls be given one more chance in righting their wrongs in all the fields of their life. However, it was clear that sending a representative from the heavens as a savior is necessary so that the human race is once again reminded of its obligations towards the whole species including the earth itself, which also needs protection against destruction ordained by man. Humans will have to learn to respect the earth and its environment. It is only hoped that the earth souls do not treat this heavenly intervention as a personal faith of some other religion being born.

[[

Poetry

Jaya Sibbu

Shaivii Parampara



Shaivii Parampara
 Sadaa Sthit rahe,
 Hai Aavshyaktaa Paramparaa Ki
 Jeevan Mai Jyoti Hai
 Dain Hai Rishiyuun kii
 Yeh -
 Shiva Kii Anand Kala
 Sattaa Mai Sthit
 Shakti Kii
 Param satya Kii,
 Ek Anubhav Kii,
 Antar chetana Kii,
 Jise Trika Darshan Mai
 Chitanya Kaha Gaya Hai,
 Yeh Maatra Shabda Nahi,
 Smriti Bhi Nahi Apitu -,
 Hai Sampuurantaa
 Agam Shastra Kii
 Abhivyakti Hai paramparaa kii
 Shiva Kevala nahi hai Shakti Sahita
 Hii Uskaa Astitva -
 Shakti Binaa hai kaise Nirmaan
 Parakh Kar Svadhyaya Kar -,
 Chintan Kar Anusmriti Say
 Aagay Jaakar Jaha'n Hai
 Prakash Aur Vimarsha Ke Beech -,
 Ek Santulan aur Sanghatthan Hai
 Wahi Lall Ded Kaa
 'Kunuyi Omkar Nabhi Dorum'
 Usay Parakh Lo Jaan Lo
 Apnii Chit Vritti mei

]]]

Yogiraj Swami Nand Lal Ji Maharaj - 3



SRI SHRIDHAR JOO DHAR, the then Conservator of Forests visited Swami Ji occasionally. He stayed and enjoyed the discourses of Swami Ji and especially wanted to see Swami Ji comfortable. He was himself an established saint and a fervent devotee of BHAGWAN GOPI NATH JI the eminent saint of Srinagar. SHRI DHAR was often seen with some saint or the other in spite of his high official position. He was a great admirer of the advancement of Swami Ji in Yoga and academics both and often got some problems fixed by Swami Ji. JUSTICE JANKI NATH BHAT was a High Court Judge and held many prestigious positions in J&K and outside was a devotee of Swami Ji and visited TIKKAR many times along with his wife. He writes in one of his papers that on his first visit to TIKKAR Swami Ji called him from distance, 'Are you BHAT Sahib?' He reports that he had the good luck to take Swami Ji along to Srinagar Airport in his car when he (Swami Ji) was going to bid final audio to Kashmir. Swami went into eternal Samadhi in Delhi (MALVIYA NAGAR) in the house of Shri PREM NATH SADHU in January 1966. According to BHAT Sahib Swami Ji was very fond of one SHRI KASHI NATH BHAT, Advocate who was his fervent devotee those days. JUSTICE BHAT further reminiscences in his write up that he was given some money by Swami Ji for the construction of a lodge for SADHUS visiting

AMARNATH SHRINE at AMBPHALLA in Jammu before his last flight from Kashmir. BHAT Sahib fulfilled this wish of Swami Ji honestly and the building came up within a short time but he regrets that the place wasn't later used as desired by Swami Ji but given on rent to raise income for the institution.



Main Disciples of Swami Ji :

Swami Ji spread his message of sustained devotion of the Lord accompanied with fair and truthful dealings in all worldly affairs. He stressed upon his devotees to get somehow detached from the attractions of the world and nurture the true love of God. He told them to be actively involved in just and truthful activities but not be constantly after collecting material wealth. The real wealth, he said, was to seek the extreme love of God and his people. The human life is a great boon and each of us should understand the purpose of this life. It is for us to use it purposefully or misuse it. The sooner we try to realize ourselves the better. It is very simple to get access to the lord. Simply try to purify your inner self by developing pure thoughts and intense devotion of the lord. Realization of the self is the way to the lord. These simple teachings of Swami Ji attracted lots of devotees from diverse hues and many among them submitted themselves eternally in the lotus feet of Swami Ji and were formally initiated into the ascetic order.

MAHATMA VIBHISHAN JI :

Swami Ji's earliest disciple worth the name was MAHATMA VIBHISHAN JI. He came in the service of Swami Ji in GOWRI-PORA KUTIYA and after hectic service he was formally initiated into sainthood. His devotion and service is an example in itself. He acquired such extraordinary capabilities that none else among the disciples of Swami Ji equaled him. His humble nature and soft attitude won him great laurels not only in the eyes of his Guru but his numerous devotees too. He talked very less and was always seen absorbed in his SADHNA. He was mostly seen in the service of his Guru though at times

he was given the charge of Ashrams at HUSHOORA or GOWRIPORA independently. He won the devotion and love of lots of people who visited him for the solution of their problems. VIBHISHAN JI had surrendered completely before his Guru and didn't like any separate personal identity. His only mission was to serve his master and pursue his personal enlightenment. Whoever met him once to seek his blessings got permanently fixed with him. After Swami Ji attained the eternal Samadhi VIBHISHAN JI continued staying in Swami Ji's Ashrams representing him and serving the community interests. On mass displacement of Pandits from Kashmir in 1990 he came to Jammu and stayed with some of his devotees for some time and then came to BOHRI (TALAB TILLU) ASHRAM got constructed by Swami Ji's wonder devotee SHALPUT JI in those appalling conditions. VIBHISHAN JI stayed there quite absorbed with his SADHNA till late nineties when he sought eternal Samadhi.

SHRI KRALBAB JI :

Next to make mention of is SHRI KRALBAB JI. He was the most popular disciple of Swami Ji who by dint of his SADHNA and achievements was able to make his own individual place after Swami Ji. KRALBAB was born at KRALGUND (HANDWARA) on PHALGUN PURNIMA in 1928. His parental name was BHAGWAN DASS and he was given this name by Swami Ji himself as he loved to call him as such because he belonged to KRALGUND. KRALBAB was initiated by his master in the TIKKAR Ashram and performed his basic KRIYA there. His progress in sainthood was very rapid and soon he was recognized as an established saint. He had soon a vast field of devotees not only in the TIKKAR area but far off places as well though he remained mostly confined to TIKKAR Ashram only. Due to the very cold climate of Kashmir in winters he had considered an Ashram outside valley. And his plans soon matured into an Ashram at UDHAMPUR in Jammu region. There were a good number of his devotees among Pandits in UDHAMPUR and consequently the magnificent Ashram of GARHI (UDHAMPUR) with the name KRALBAB ASHRAM came up beside the national highway. The Ashram proved a great boon for the fleeing Pandits from the valley for its sufficient accommodation and efficient management. Lots of them found shelter there in the most telling circumstances. It is said that KRALBAB JI had quite before indicated to the turmoil

in the valley and the bad times for Pandits and wanted the Ashram to be built for this purpose also. Hence it served as a resting place for hundreds of Pandits till they got temporarily settled somewhere else. The other Ashrams in his name were constructed at VENKURA and NAMTEHAL in BUDGAM area of Kashmir besides the recently constructed at BANTALAB, JAMMU. Shri KRALBAB JI achieved NIRVAVA on MAGHA SHUKLA TRITYA in 1968 and the day is celebrated with grand celebrations and HAWANS in all Ashrams especially GARHI (UDHAMPUR), the Ashram very well maintained by Swami Kumar Ji the beloved disciple of SHRI KRALBAB JI. The legacy of Swami Ji is very well carried forward by his PARIWAR wherever they are.

MASTBAB JI :

MASTBABJI belonged to BUDLADA (PUNJAB) a householder with two kids. He belonged to a farmer family with name SOHAN LAL. Right from childhood he was not satisfied with his life and wanted to do something special. The worldly material wealth didn't attract him till one day he left his home in search of the ultimate reality. He visited many places and persons but couldn't find his soul's thirst fulfilled. At last he reached Kashmir and heard about Swami Ji and the TIKKAR Ashram. On reaching there Swami Ji welcomed him and told him it was his destination. Immediately he found his soul's content and dedicated himself to the service of Swami Ji. He was named as MASTRAM and initiated into sainthood probably there or in GOWRIPORA ASHRAM as in those days Swami Ji was frequently on move from place to place to spread his message. MASTRAM JI proved to be the most dedicated saint to the purpose. He acquired the various stages of sainthood and Yoga in minimum prescribed time and soon became the beloved of Swami Ji. He has adopted all the SANSKARS of Kashmir Pandit culture and become fully conversant with Kashmiri Language. His Ashram at BADIPORA (BUDGAM) was constructed by his devotees of the area and named MASTBUB ASHRAM. He stayed there on the insistence of his devotees but he always preferred to be nearer to his GURU MAHARAJ. After the MAHA-SAMADHI of Swami Ji MASTBAB JI remained on move often outside valley visiting TIRTH-ASTHAPANS unknown even to his beloved devotees. The grand MASTBUB ASHRAM at PATOLI JAMMU was raised in mid eighties and MASTBUB JI came there when it was on the last stages of construction. In fact MASTBUB JI is an awakened

saint quite unconcerned about the material developments. The MASTBUBASHRAM at PATOLI proved a great shelter and support for the displaced Pandits in Jammu after 1990 turmoil. Hundreds of Pandits spent days and nights in the Ashram and found solace and peace in the blessings of MASTBUB JI. The Ashram keeps always humming with activities both in the presence and absence of MASTBUB JI. The mornings and evenings keep very busy with devotees singing BHAJANS in the praise of the lord and especially the GUR-ASTUTI which gives immense solace to everyone every where. Other MASTBUB ASHRAMS constructed in Delhi and HARIDWAR are also very well established and provided with all essential requirements. The HARIDWAR ASHRAM is the real beloved place of MASTBUB JI. He spends most of his time there and many of his devotees go there in his service and stay there for many days. MASTBUB JI is a kind of saint who wants solitude so he prefers mostly being out of Jammu as the heavy rush of devotees there seems to disturb his peace and tranquility.

SEDBUB

The original name of SEDBUB was SHRI VEDLAL BHAT. He belonged to HAJIVERA (PATTAN) and was a householder. He was a saint of very high order with numerous attained SIDHEES. His association with Swami Ji is not well defined but one thing is clear that the name SEDMOL was given to him by Swami Ji himself as a tradition maintained by him and consequently he was called SEDBUB by his devotees and admirers. Some are of the opinion that Swami Ji had initiated him and he was his Guru but the fact is not very strongly established. Whatever the facts are it can't be denied that there was some sacred celestial relation between the two great souls. They have been seen together on numerous occasions in almost all Ashrams, tours and on special occasions sharing some moments quite unknown to the onlookers but definitely indicative of some special relationship. During the last moments of worldly existence, in the house of SHRI PREM NATH SADHU at MALVIYA NAGAR, NEW DELHI, Swami Ji was accompanied by SEDBUB and it is said that they kept busy for long hours in some special talks before Swami Ji went into eternal Samadhi. SEDBUB, though a householder, was perfectly detached from the worldly affairs. Though seemingly associated with his family responsibilities he was a SANYASI in the real sense of the term. A perfect SIDH Yogi he was a fully awakened soul with

clear knowledge of everything that made him stand upright in the realm of sainthood. SEDBUB had opted for no Ashram or a place associated with his memory in Kashmir. He left his mortal coil at his native place at HANJIVERA (PATTAN). His devotees later tried to raise a memorial at the site of his Samadhi but strangely a feud erupted between local Muslims and Pandits and the administration had to put a ban on the construction to avoid confrontation. This was in late eighties as the situation in Kashmir had already turned volatile due to large scale influx of Pakistan trained insurgents into the valley. Now after the displacement of Pandits in 1990 and the bulk of them placed in Jammu the devotees of SEDBUB have constructed a magnificent Ashram in his name at PALOURA, JAMMU where there is a huge rush of devotees daily besides celebrations of grand HAWANS and other events in the name of SEDBUB.

SHALPUT JI

SHALPUT JI was a boy of 5-6 years when he got attracted to Swami Ji in HUSHOORAASHRAM. His parental name is JAI KISHEN and he belongs to parents from HUSHOORA who were regular visitors to Swami Ji there. The name SHALPUT was given to him by Swami Ji when he frequently insisted on staying in the Ashram and wanted to be close to Swami Ji. Though Swami Ji didn't initiate SHALPUT JI directly to sainthood in his lifetime because of his tender age but SHALPUT JI came into the holy fold automatically when the time was ripe for him. It is some celestial connection and a quite unknown guarded secret but the indications definitely relate something worth a mention. It was in late seventies when SHALPUT JI was a student of class X that he left his home for a destination for which he had taken birth. A youth of barely 18 with flowing locks of hair, strikingly attractive features, came directly to the house of SHRI JIA LAL DASS OF BOMAI (SOPORE), probably to get inspired by the place and people where Swami Ji had stayed for many long years in his formative years of sainthood. He was welcomed warmly by the whole household for their love and devotion to Swami Ji. Everyone in the DASS FAMILY instantly became alive once more with the reminiscences of Swami Ji and thus started the renovation of the KUTIYA at GOWRI-PORA. It was soon discovered that SHALPUT JI was a past master singer of BHAJANS in accompaniment of harmonium. Thus the whole nights in DASS HOUSE were spent for not less than two months with

SHALPUT JI singing BHAJANS in accompaniment of the youth of the family and the rest of the members enjoying as if Swami Ji was himself present. This author has personally witnessed that everyone in the DASS family kept awake all these nights enjoying the devotion of the lord and Swami Ji. SHALPUT JI was such overwhelmed by the devotion of the family and others around for Swami Ji that he decided to stay in the KUTIYA and get inspired by the place where Swami Ji had spent many long years of SADHNA. Soon he settled there and the devotees in large numbers started coming to see this wonder devotee of Swami Ji. What followed were more constructions in the KUTIYA and more celebrations and HAWANS and especially the daily BHAJAN-MADALI which was the main attraction. Time passed and SHALPUT JI progressed in sainthood and the number of devotees went on increasing day by day till 1990 when the displacement of Pandits started in consequence of the threat perception of the Muslim fundamentalist elements in the valley. In no time Pandits began moving out bag and baggage and so did SHALPUT JI. After some stray lodgings he managed for a little piece of land in AANAND NAGAR, BOHRI (JAMMU) donated by a builder and thus came up the SHALPUT ASHRAM there. The field of influence of SHALPUT JI has increased tremendously all these years and devotees especially Pandits from far and wide continue coming here. MAHATMA VIBHISHAN JI had been staying here in this Ashram for long time and SHALPUT JI served him with great devotion and treated him as his Guru. It was here that VIBHISHAN JI achieved NIRVANA and SHALPUT did all KRIYA and service whatever suited this great soul and the beloved disciple of Swami Ji. One more SHALPUT ASHRAM has been constructed with the help of local people at JIBB near GARHI (UDHAMPUR) within very beautiful and cool surroundings. MAHATMA VIBHISHAN JI loved to stay there for the solitude and serene atmosphere and the devotion that he got from the residents especially Pandits.

Swami Ji's Teachings :

SWAMI NANDLAL JI was a celibate since childhood and an accomplished Yogi. He had acquired the highest stages of enlightenment through rigorous SADHANA and YOG- KRIYA in minimum period of time. His pure conscience and simple teachings won him great laurels and he was soon accepted one among the most awakened souls in the high echelons of sainthood of the time. Though Swami Ji

had acquired bare minimum formal education but his thirst of knowledge was so great that from day one he sought ways and means to acquire highest religious scholarship firstly at the feet of some learned teachers and then his Guru. Lots of aspirants later took advantage of his profound knowledge and especially his discourses on the teachings from BHAGAVAD-GITA, UPANISHADS and VEDAS. He was a great admirer of LALLESHURI, the great YOGINI and poet saint of Kashmir. He often quoted LALLA-WAKHS in order to establish his philosophy of simple advancement in life by way of simple detachment from the futile worldly attractions and glamour of riches. He believed in the strict disciplined life based on the Yogic practices and sustained SADHANA. He also believed in the supremacy of a householder's life model but the aspirant here had a greater responsibility of combining SANYASA with day to day activities, is what he said. The same is true with everyone. KARMA-YOGA shows us the simple way of achieving the highest goals in life. Swami Ji wanted his devotees to follow the normal activities of life based on truth and fair dealings. He time and again stressed upon the great opportunity that we are provided with in our lives to achieve something higher than the ordinary existence. One whose mind is perpetually attached to the memory of the Lord despite being busy in just and truthful worldly vocations is a perfect Yogi. Swami Ji wanted his devotees learn the simple lesson of doing everything in the name of Lord so that nothing wrong is done and each and every life performs better for the uplift of his or her individual self. One should cultivate the feeling that all that exists belongs to God and regard everything as God's play, renouncing both attachment and desire for fruit.

The life of Swami Ji is an open book to be read by all. His devotees were especially inspired by his simple, clean and highly disciplined way of life. He was always ready to help anybody out of worldly difficulties as well as spiritual hurdles. He involved his devotees occasionally in discourses on the purity of life, NITYA-KARMA and BAKHTI (sustained devotion of the lord). About NITYA-KARMA that we perform every morning and evening, Swami Ji said, it was an exceedingly important activity in our daily routine. It should be performed with due attention and in right earnest. The time devoted to the NITYA-KARMA i.e. morning (GAYATRI) and evening (SANDYA) is the most valuable, most sacred and most useful. Paying less attention to it and going through it hurriedly, he said, was the reason that

we're deprived of its benefits and joy. Swami Ji had no inhibitions in allowing anybody in his fold provided one was ready to maintain certain discipline essential for the higher life. Lots of Muslims too have been benefited by the healing powers of Swami Ji and as such many of them even now remember his magnanimity and the height of his awareness.

BAKHTI or sustained devotion of God is the surest, shortest and easiest way of self-realization but a SADHAKA should clearly understand the spirit of the BAKHTI otherwise a lukewarm approach will lead him nowhere. BAKHTI pertains to the spirit of devotion which is disinterested in character and unobstructed in its course. Human mind gets purified only by the extreme love of the Lord. One whose heart melts completely in His devotion is the true beloved of the Lord. Swami Ji said that the Lord's wish is absolutely the wish of His celebrated devotees. Those who surrender completely to the will of the Lord win Him over completely. This is essential for our SADHANA that our heart must cooperate. Swami Ji said that one must be able to put one's whole heart into one's SADHANA, be it DYANA (meditation), JAPA or PRANAYAMA (control of breath). The most important factor in UPASANA is love combined with reverence. Love transforms all work into worship and whatever is done with love leaves an indelible impression on our mind. The worship done in desultory manner, in a half-hearted way, will bear no fruit even if done for years together; whereas UPASANA done with reverence and love, even once, will yield speedy results and be a source of untold joy and peace.

As a spiritual SADHANA, Swami Ji said, practice of divine name is at once the easiest and the best; there is nothing higher than that. The more secretly the practice is performed, the higher the result. It is necessary that the JAPA of the divine name be performed most secretly so that others do not know about it. A SADHANA performed secretly floods the heart of the devotee with love for the Lord and brings immense joy and peace. Concentration of mind while performing any kind of SADHANA is essential. Achieving concentration is hard but not impossible. It takes some time and practice to master concentration. Mind should be cleared of all the dross of worldly worries and cares and got fixed on a single point i.e. God's name; concentration follows. BAKHTI or love of God is the supreme achievement to be attained by a devotee. When a person is flooded with intense love of God he is freed of all worries and cares and he experiences great joy and peace

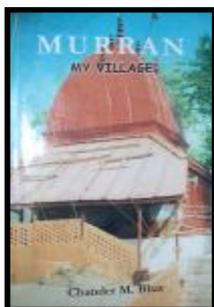
and nothing but the grace of the Lord remains supreme with him. All worldly attractions instantly shake off and a feeling of eternal bliss is experienced. Swami Ji stressed upon his devotees to work tirelessly for achieving BAKHTI of the Lord such that it became the only priority with them not the collection of worldly possessions. The ardent lovers of God enjoy the perennial presence of the almighty in their thought so naturally their each deed or action is enveloped by the divine bliss and hence nothing goes amiss in their hands and everything whatever they do or experience is right and there is no question of doing anything wrong by them. Swami Ji worked tirelessly in making his devotees understand how they could in a very simple way attain the highest purpose of their lives. "Be truthful and fair, clear your mind of the dirt of the worldly attractions and keep the Lord's name alive in your mind all the time so that nothing bad is done," said Swami Ji. BAKHTI or love of God transports a devotee to the realm of Godliness and hence there remains no choice of doing anything wrong. 'Everything and everybody is simply God's grace', such higher feelings clear the mind of the devotee of all the dross of worldly attractions and naturally he or she is lifted above the normal life of an individual and there remains a negligible gap between God and the devotee. Swami Ji was a saint with a mission to make his devotees follow the greatest reality of human life in simplest terms. He left no stone unturned to fulfill his mission and succeeded in transforming the lives of thousands of his devotees from ordinary to ideal human beings. His impact was so great and lasting that whoever came to bow before his holy presence once kept attached for life. And surprisingly it hasn't ceased even after Swami Ji's celestial flight but remains eternally with his devotees, not only those who have blessed themselves with his holy DARSHANA but also those equally who are coming into his holy fold after his material absence. The fact is appropriately described in the famous GURUASTUTI penned by LATE SHRI NEELKANTH JI and recited by all devotees every morning and evening which says:

O MY SATGURU! I DEPEND ONLY UPON YOUR MORAL SUPPORT EVERY MOMENT.
IN THE DARKNESS OF MY IGNORANCE YOU ARE ALWAYS A BEACON LIGHT LIKE SUN TO SHOW ME WAY OUT FROM DARKNESS TO LIGHT.

Contact author at: bhatji1@gmail.com

Books ... Books ... Books

Post Exodus Publications of KP writers



Book : Murran 'My village'
Author : Chander M. Bhat
 Shiv Nagar, Near Devika,
 Ward No. 10,
 Udhampur 182 101.
Tel: 01992-272995.
Mob: 9419160793
E-mail: chander_1831@rediffmail.com
Website:
www.geocities.com/chandermhat
Publisher: Vyeth Graphics
 W-23, Sector 11, Noida (U.P.)
Pages: 127
Price: Rs. 200.00
Available at: Vyeth Graphics
 W-23, Sector 11, Noida (U.P.)

About the Book:

Murran - My Village is not merely a research work of the author but it also reflects warmth of the blood of young progeny to explore their roots. Living in exile to explore the roots which feed every leaf of the different branches is the climax of the concept of love, concern and above all nostalgia. Today, the displaced Kashmiri Pandits might be on the verge of extinction, but as long as there is hope, there is life. Hope is a must to survive and if hope vanishes, it leads to the evolution of history and the history means buried facts under the debris of circumstantial cyclones.

If someone strenuously exercise his best to pick up the spade and search for what is under the debris, he keeps hope alive. The book is also a try to keep the community alive.

Murran might be a delible dot on the draught of Kyshap's Kashmir, but the drops form an ocean. Apart from the love of home village, its history along with memories, the book is a light house in the dark

tense. Today it is village Murran, tommorrow it could be every indispensable mote of Kashmir. History, family trees, places of note are not only the areas depicted in this book but the book also reflects author's sense of responsibility, maturity, pain, love and memories.

What they say about the Book :

Arjan Dev Majboor: The research work of Mr. Chander M. Bhat has confirmed my belief that struggle is the crown of manhood and glory of faith.

Ashok Pandit: One can not pay completely the debt to the village that retains us in the lap but coming out with a book 'Murran - My Village', Mr. Chander M. Bhat has done a great service to his village.

Dr. Agnishekhar: The book has once again touched the height of nostalgia.

Prof. C.L.Sapru: Living away from the home village and writing the history along with the family tree of Murran, Chander M. Bhat has unfolded his capabilities, talent and aptitude for the research work.

J.N.Raina (Ex. Bureau Chief of UNI): At this hour when the Kashmiri Pandits are at the verge of extinction and trying for survival, Mr. Chander M. Bhat has set a foot-print for others to follow.

T.N.Bhat (Virginia State, USA): It is very cumbersome job to search out one's roots. Mr. Chander M. Bhat has done a yeoman's job by exploring the family tree of his village.

|||

It is perhaps for the first time anybody has taken up his village as a topic and written about it at length. Chander M. Bhat's book 'Murran - My Village' starts with an introduction to the land of Kashmir and its inhabitants, and goes on to describe briefly the district of Pulwama (original name 'Panwangam') in which Murran is located, its archaeological monuments, temples, shrines and important statistics.

In the chapter titled Brief History, the author has delved at length into the location and history of village Murran, describing evolution of its name, its habitations, its land and people, and above all, the legendary figures born there who rose to the pinnacles of fame, like Pandit Halder Bhat, Pt. Gangadhar Bhat, Bhagvani Tarawati Pandit (Bhawani

Your Own Page

ART IN EXILE

9. अष्टदल कमल (Ashtadala / Eight Petalled Lotus)



हादिनी सन्धिनी सवित् त्वय्येका सर्वसंश्रये।
हादतापकरी मिश्रा त्वपि नो गुणवर्जिते॥



COLLAGED PAINTING No: 14

Title of the Painting:

ASHTADAL KAMAL

Ashtadal Kamal is the section of the Shri Chakra. The Ashtadala represents the Ashta Siddhis, Eight perfections within Yoga. This painting is based on the Taitriya Upanishad and the Chakreshvara at Hari Parbat. The Sutra reads as: Satyam Jnanam Anantam Brahma. The Divine Mother or the Absolute is an integral awareness of all that exists. It is a total knowledge in which all is self-evident.

Chaman Lal Raina
Miami, USA

rainachamanlal@yahoo.com