



Connecting Roots

Net-journal of 'Project Zaan'

For Private Circulation Only

प्रागाश
प्रागाश



Praagaash
प्रागश

Dedicated to Our Heritage, Our Language and Our Culture



Magnificent Harmukh, Kashmir (Elevation 5142 M) Photo @katoch104
1567 Mtr below lies Gangabal Lake 2500 M Long, 1000 M Wide
(Photos bottom left wordpress.com, bottom right Memorable India)

ॐ नमामि त्वां शारदा देवीं, महाभागीं भगवतीं काश्मीर पुरवासिनीं
विद्या दायिनीं रक्ष माम् रक्ष माम् । नमामि त्वाम् ।

वर्ष ५ : अंक ४ ~ अप्रैल २०२० Vol 5 : No. 4 ~ April 2020

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Editorial

We are encouraged to see the popularity of our Supplements with the readers, first The Story of a Bicycle (released with the February 2020 issue of Praagaash) and then the Zoonabai (released with the March 2020 issue of Praagaash). Not only that people have read it with interest but have also encouraged us with their written responses. Thanks Readers.



With some relaxation in the use of internet and social media in Jammu and Kashmir, our hopes of holding the Kashmiri Language Workshop sometime in May-June 2020 in Srinagar had greatly revived. Readers may be aware, the Workshop was scheduled to be held in Srinagar on 24-25 August 2019 but got cancelled due to abnormal political developments. However, the Corona scare has stopped us from taking any initiative in that direction for the time being. We can only pray to Almighty to bless us and relieve us from the havoc we find ourselves in.

In the meantime, I may share this news with my readers. Jammu Kashmir Vichar Manch (JKVM), New Delhi has recently conferred the Krishan Joo Razdan Saraswati Puraskar upon the undersigned for his contribution to Kashmiri Language and Culture. It may be mentioned that the Kashmir Education, Culture and Science Society (KECSS), New Delhi and All India Kashmiri Samaj (AIKS), New Delhi have already honoured the undersigned in 2013 and 2015 respectively for his outstanding contribution in the field of Kashmiri Language and Literature.



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Editorial Office : 104-B, Galaxy, Agarwal Township, Kaul's Heritage City, Babhola, Vasai Road (W), Dist. Palghar 401 202, Maharashtra, India
E-Mail : rainamk1@yahoo.co.in ~ Cell : +91-9422473459 ~ Website : <https://kpmumbai.org/praagaash/> ~ Layout & DTP : Ashwin Raina

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واخ - لال دد

دیهی لری داری بر تروپریم
پرانو چور روتوم ت دوتومس دم |
هدیچی کورر اندر گوندوم
اوم کی چوبک تومس بام | |

★ ★ ★

دیو وٹا دیور وٹا
پٹ بون چھئی ییکه واٹھ
پوڑ کس کرکھ ہوئے بٹا
کرنس ت پونس سنگاٹھ



شوخ - شوخ نूर-उद-दीन वली

کینن دوتوتھ ییتی کھاو توتوت
کینن ییتی نت توتوت کھاو |
کینن دوتوتھ لالوک تروتوت
کینن گاشی منجو گوتوت گاه | |

★ ★ ★

کینن چل کتھ کل بڈ ہرریتھ
کینن دار ت توتوت آپی ونی |
کینن اموتوت پرکث ہرریتھ
کینن وومبور گپی دتوتوتنی | |



وچہ لردار بر تروپریم
پرانہ ژور وٹم تہ دیتمس دم
ہر دچہ کوٹھر اندر گوندوم
اوم چہ چوبک تومس بام

کینن دیتتھ ییتہ کیا و توتے
کینن ییتہ نہ تہ توتے کیاہ
کینن دیتتھ لالک تروتے
کینن گاشہ منجہ گوتے گاہ

دیو وٹا دیور وٹا
پٹ بون چھئی ییکه واٹھ
پوڑ کس کرکھ ہوئے بٹا
کرنس ت پونس سنگاٹھ

کینن رھلہ کتھ کل بودہر تھ
کینن دار تہ تولہ آپی ونی
کینن امرتھ پرکرتھ ہر تھ
کینن وومپر گپی دتوتوتنی



Episode

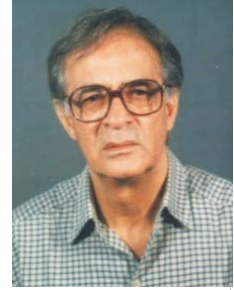
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Luminaries of the Kashmiri Language

Nadim Sahib

My Pleasant Remembrances

- Onkar Aima



Soon after the invasion of the Valley by Pakistan on 22nd October 1947, feudalism in Kashmir had spectacular collapse, people's government was formed and along with it a great cultural upsurge unleashed. In 1948, Kashmir Cultural Front, an organisation of all available artistic talent was formed. This organization was later rechristened - The National Cultural Congress. Nadim Sahib (Dina Nath Nadim), was one of the leading organisers of the new cultural movement that spearheaded Kashmiri cultural and literary renaissance. The cultural activities were revived, Kashmiri plays were written and staged, which were witnessed by thousands of people both on stage or open air stage. Nadim Sahib emerged the tallest among the Kashmiri poets and playwrights. He gave new dimensions to Kashmiri poetry and plays. He introduced Blank Verse, Sonnet and Opera. In 1950, I was able to form Dramatic Club with the Principal Mohammad Ahmed was in-charge of the Club and I was elected Secretary of the Club. 'Mahabharata' and 'Ahuti' were staged by the Club in 1950 and both plays. 'Ahuti' was a great success. It was for the first time that the girl acted in the play - 'Ahuti'. In 1952, I was Stage Director of the play - 'Chataan' - staged by the Club. Tasting a little bit of success, I caught the acting and direction bug - passion. I saw the plays staged in Kashmir. I read books, but I did not get the feel of it - feel of stage craft.



In 1953, a meeting was held by Nadim Sahib at the residence of Mohan Lal Aima, my elder brother. I was asked to serve tea and thus a God given chance to listen to Nadim Sahib. It is then, I learnt that they were staging, opera, 'Bombur Yambarzal'. He spoke calmly but like an expert on stage craft. He listened to all, discussed it and rejected or adopted the suggestions on merit. It is there I learnt that Aima Sahib was to compose the Music and direct the play. Nadim Sahib's Knowledge of stagecraft, his narration of the theme, the way he expressed his feelings, struck me. I was drawn towards him. In another meeting later on at the same residence, while talking about stage play presentation, he said something like this - Stage is a creative art in itself and not just a duplicate of what literature (or Poems) say. I started having feel of the stage and its magic. I started reading his poems and plays. I had a burning

Episode

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Luminaries of the Kashmiri Language

desire to act in the opera. I did not get a chance. 'Bombur Yambarzal' was a great success. The music of the opera was highly appreciated and the song 'Bombro-Bombro' became very popular. Producer of the film 'Mission Kashmir', Mr. Chopra, lifted the lyrics and tune of 'Bombro Bombro' from the original opera, staged in 1953. It created sensation all over India and became very popular.

Ultimately my prayers were granted. In 1956, I got the chance to act in 'Heemal Nagirai' written jointly by Nadim Sahib and Roshan Sahib. While Kemmu Sahib choreographed its dances, the music was composed by Aima Sahib and also directed by him. This opera like 'Bombur Yambarzal' was based on one of our old folk tales - legends. It is said that in the village in Pulwama, there is a spring, known as 'Heemali hund Nag'. This is a very ancient folk tale, when Kashmir was inhabited by Nagas and Peechachis, who had constant strife amongst them to establish supremacy over one another. Nagirai, prince of Nagas is fed up with his cunning queens and he emerges in the house of 'Soda' and 'Chhore Baten' as a young boy. They accept him as their son. I played the role of 'Chhore Baten' and Roshan that of Soda, 'Nagrai' falls in love with 'Heemal' and marries her. 'Koonah' is sent by Nagar to sow seeds of suspicion in 'Heemal's' mind. He succeeds. The efforts of 'Nagirai' to finish animosity and hatred between his people and Peechachis, to have peace in Kashmir are wasted. In the end with the help of a hermit, Heemal and Nagirai meet. Their efforts, their sacrifice and their love ultimately awakens both sides. Hatred and animosity are washed off and peace prevails in Kashmir. While 'Bombur tu Yambarzal' depicted triumph of good over evil, 'Heemal and Nagirai' depicted victory of love and human spirit. Nadim Sahib had keen ear for sound and rhythm of his native language. He and Aima Sahib made an ideal combination and produced one more stirring opera, rich in tantalizing music, which is important and dominating element of opera, to create emotional impact. Shadow technique, was successfully used in the opera which made narration striking. During making of 'Heemal Nagirai' I got more and more chance to meet, watch, know and understand Nadim Sahib.

Both the operas, mentioned above are based on old, ancient folk tales. Perhaps he was fascinated by these tales and had a feeling that these are like voices of our ancestors which come to us from sources of our culture and thus should be respected.

More I saw Nadim Sahib, more I met him, more I read him, I understood and realised that he was simplicity personified:-

- Simple Clothes ... unfussy
- Simple Life ... humble ... lowly
- Simple Language ... straight forward .. plain effortless
- Simple Presentation ... (Operas) ... direct ... unvarnished.

Two things which I marked very keenly about Nadim Sahib were his smile and his expression of eyes. He had a permanent striking and smoothing smile on his face. His eyes, I felt sincerely, were speaking eyes.- penetrating.

After reading Nadim Sahib, it does not need great effort to conclude that his great success lies in his mastery of Kashmiri Language. Nadim Sahib, the

Episode

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Luminaries of the Kashmiri Language

brilliant Kashmiri intellectual enriched his work with simple, Kashmiri words and phrases. He established that, language of everyday speech, is rich and adaptable for a poetic medium, and does not need to deck itself in borrowed robes. He conveyed ideas most beautifully in simple day to day spoken language and caught the imagination of literate or illiterate Kashmiri. He used the language, which a commoner understood, felt, was touched and did identify with. That made him the most significant poet and opera writer of the period. His favorite - preferred poem was ‘Me chham aash pagahuch’, as said by him to Mr.Saqi in a conversation. This poem was his faith, his belief. He believed in universal love - oneness of mankind - peace. In spite of all the turmoil, he had strong faith in tomorrow. Never say die was his motto.

This poem ‘Me chham aash pagahuch’ is my mood lifter. Whenever I am dejected and depressed by the happenings in the Valley and about the plight of my community, I read this poem again and again. It is sad and unfortunate that this poem could not be put on *Chhakree* - or on any folk tune - because it is music of ideas, not of words. It would have been, I believe, as popular as ‘Bombro Bombro’ or perhaps more.

Nadim Sahib became a legend. He is no more with us. yet I see him on the top of the Banihal mountain. I see him sometimes facing Valley and singing ‘Vothee Baaguch Kukilee’. Some other time I see him facing sky saying ‘*Bu gyava na az*’. It is a faint voice. I cannot hear it clearly. Perhaps he is saying

(*Bu tarna voni Kasheeri*)

*totaani yotaani nu iraaduh myani beyi asan
lasan tu basan, tu rathi khasi muraad myani
so toth myon nundabon baag son
yohoy panun panun vatan
yi beyi vuchhan
aabaad aazaad tu kwosh yivun
bahaar hyoo tu lov lokachaar hyoo*

Yet again, at times I see him facing Jammu and Delhi and singing ‘*Me chham aash pagahuch, pagaah sholi duniyaah*’. During all this scene, I see him alone, without any alive member of his old trusted team, on either side of Banihal, responding to his voice. Perhaps they have withdrawn themselves into a shell or perhaps their priorities have changed. Yet I am not disillusioned. I may not live to see the day, but Nadim Sahib's dream morning will come true, all darkness will disappear, violence will go, hatred will vanish. Love and Peace will prevail.



[**Note:** The author Onka Aima Sahib was the hero of first Kashmiri film *Maanziraat*. He acted in Hindi films and TV serials too. He was a founding member of Project Zaan of Mumbai and a great social worker. This write-up appeared in *Milchar* of KPA Mumbai April-June 2002. Aima Sahib left us in the year 2002.]

Last moments of Marriyam Begum - The Agha-Bai of Zoonab Dab



By Bashir Arif

Famous Sufi saint of Kashmir says:

قران پران کونو مودکہ۔
قران پران کونہ گوئے سور
قران پران زندہ کیتہہ رودکہ
قران پران دود منصور

This piece of eternal poetry of Sheikh-ul-Aalam was too heavy for me to be understood. It was only after the great and self made lady Marriyam Begum left this world for heavenly abode at the Jammu residence of her younger son Khurshid Ahmad (Saeba) who was posted there.

After her retirement from Radio Kashmir Srinagar she was shifting to Delhi or Jammu to be with her children during winters. That fateful winter she was at Jammu. As a daily routine she after offering Fajjar (morning) prayers started reading Quraan. In the

meantime her daughter-in-law got a cup of Kashmiri qehwa for her. Marriyam ji asked her to leave it there to let it cool and continued reading Quraan.

After some time her daughter-in-law came again and asked her to have the qehwa first. She got annoyed after she saw Marriyam ji in a different posture. She had put her head on the holy book Quraan.



Her daughter-in-law returned angrily and complained to her husband that his mother had gone crazy and that she had no respect for Quraan. She also said if his mother felt like sleeping, she should have gone to her room and rested properly.

Khurdshid, Marriyam's son rushed to the room with little anger. "Bobai yee chha karan. yeh chhu gonah Quraanas peth yithe paeth kala trawun." (Mother, this is a sin to behave like this while reading Quraan) There was no reply. He tried to wake her up but alas she had already breathed her last. The cup of Qehwa was still on her right side. Her death came as a blow to me as she would love me like a real mother.

Marriyam Begum played the role of Radio mother for me for 22 long years. And while saying good bye to this world, she translated the Shaikh-ul-Aalam's poetic marvel in virtual sense and the meaning brought this piece of eternal poetry as a reality for us.

Dear Maryam Ji, I am sure you must be enjoying the choicest comforts in the choicest heaven. We will miss you till we are carrying the burden of this mortal world.



*Encounter with Reality - Er. Manzoor Nawchoo***Sweet Dreams Turned Into Bitter Reality**

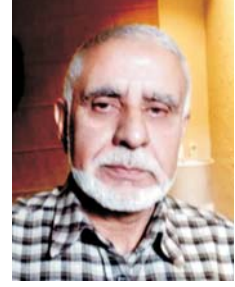
It was a very soothing early morning when I along with my wife was strolling in the lush green lawns of our house and breathing fresh morning air blended with the fragrance of different types of flowers in full bloom, making the atmosphere mesmerizing and pollution free.

Though our residential colony has no grown up plantation in and around our residential premises being newly promoted but on one of its sides where there is a vast camp of Border Security Force located on a higher contour than our colony contours, had been got decorated by way of fixing of different colour artificial flower bunting and the trees standing in the middle of its lawns decorated with electric illumination on the occasion of Dusehra giving a civilian look to the camp which otherwise is having a completely military atmosphere. As usual



there was early morning drill going on to the tunes of the military band followed by laughter therapy given to the BSF personnel which makes the dawning down of the day more enthusiastic and energetic.

Suddenly there was a big bang which shattered our house and my sweet dream came to an

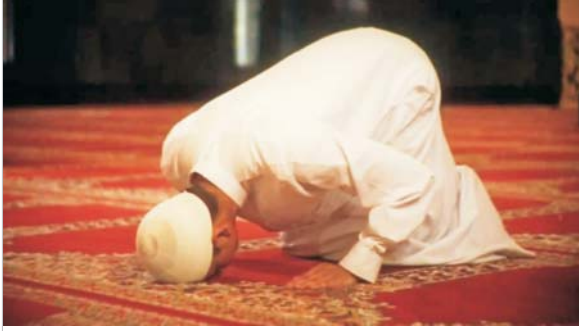


end abruptly. I felt shivers going down my spine. I heard my wife murmuring something with fear and agony inaudible to me. Her sound sleep was also suddenly broken. It was exactly 4.15 AM in our wall clock. Although there was a lull for sometime it followed by a burst of firing which frightened both of us.

Since the firing intermittently continued, we sensed something was going wrong in the BSF Camp premises adjoining our colony. We rushed down to ground floor taking shelter for safety if anything worst than that would happen. Our bed room in the first floor and stair case of the house faced the camp, it was very dangerous to rush down amid firing as in such

situations most of the bullets stray away and hit innocent and unaware targets.

As under such circumstances one forgets worldly attractions and thinks of next world only, we also surrendered to Almighty and stood for offering Fajr Salah (morning prayers) after we crawled up to the washroom for ablution (Wadu) though it was also risky to reach the washroom. Upon the development of such a situation, one really realizes the



weaknesses of a human being who fears for life and pins hope on the Might of Almighty Who is the Savior but comprehends it only in adverse conditions.

While we were offering the prayers, some more strong blasts with loud bangs happened, followed by firing but it caused no fear to us as we were standing in front of Allah Who is merciful to give us strength and infuse more faith in us to rely upon Him under such life threatening conditions.

Around 6.30 AM there was complete calm for some time which encouraged us to prepare our breakfast as fear had made us more hungry than usual. Our kitchen was on the rear side of our house, not a direct target from BSF Camp. It was astonishing for me to see my wife having prepared the breakfast in full comprising of bread toasts, low fat butter, three number boiled eggs sprinkled with salt & pepper but with yoke in such adverse conditions. Daring to ask my wife the reasons for not serving yokeless eggs that time she



replied that cholesterol doesn't go high due to fear. It looked like a good medical reason. I vehemently agreed to her as I had been very fond of yoke in my younger days and thought it was right time to take it at last. During this respite I murmured a Kashmiri couplet "Jaan wandi yu jaani jaanano" which would mean killing one's own self for the living. My wife would murmur 'Touba Takseer' for asking pardon from Allah for any sins committed by us.

To know what exactly was happening, we switched on our TV and were aghast to read breaking news which read 'Fidayeen attack on BSF Camp near Srinagar Airport.



Image : Economic Times

Immediately there were continuous grenade blasts followed by uninterrupted firing which again shook our house and we felt as if glass panes of our windows were getting shattered. It was more frightening and threatening than before. It was so severe that we lied down on the floor covering our heads with our arms and hands while not bothering about rest part of our bodies, though our postures were very awkward if adored during normal times. We recited Quranic verses relevant to the situation which virtually took us to next world without any fear and forgetting our children, kith and kin. Property was no consideration and concern during such a battlefield like situation. I felt frequent necessity of urination which as per medical education happens in fearful situations with a human being. Going to washroom many a times was like a marathon crawl for me. After every urination I went for ablution to make myself ready and fit for going to the next world at least neat and clean. Thank God I didn't feel loose motion as it happens in such a situation. I still wonder how my wife didn't get it? She had in fact resisted without any complaint as opposed to men, being a complete woman made of tolerance, patience and strength by her birth.

With every blast we would cry 'Allah-u-Akbar' which we do less in normal conditions. Though very fearful, every blast would make us to come closer to each other for going from



this world with our hand in hand which would look pleasant to our Allah taking us as a virtuous couple from earth but knowing better the ins and outs of a human being. No matter we live in separate rooms during a discord on any trifles and flimsy grounds vowing not to live in one room any more but for slow and steady patch up happening naturally. Here I recollect how two enemy neighbours would rescue each other during 2014 floods but again resorted to animosity immediately after its recede taking no lessons from it.

However we (me & my wife) took many lessons, sufficiently and permanently, from this horrifying Fidayeen attack in our neighbourhood.

In the meanwhile calls from our relatives and friends started coming on our cell phones and land-line which infused some life in our almost motionless bodies. It provided us an opportunity to ask for forgiveness from them for anything if done wrong by us with them. It was both emotional as well as religious. I am sure Allah was both smiling and taking pity upon us after seeing our total submission to Him (swt).



Since the frequency and severity of big bang blasts and uninterrupted firing increased, we took shelter in one of the rear rooms in the ground floor. In the meantime we heard the sound of vehicle movement on our colony roads which made us more anxious as we rightly



sensed presence of armed forces in our colony. The clock was reading 12 O'Clock. As my wife is somewhat more brave than me, she ventured to go up to the first floor with her head down shielding it from expected bullets with her Dupatta and peeped out of a window despite my warnings and good bye. However she encouraged me also to go up and see for myself the situation outside. It was very horrible to see forces having taken positions at different strategic points made by them and



facing the BSF Camp pointing their guns towards it. A bullet proof vehicle was positioned exactly in front of gate of our house and some personnel had taken position in one of our neighbouring houses closer to camp than ours. It made us sure that some big fight between the forces and the militants was ensuing which could result in collateral damages including blasting of our houses and loss of our lives.



We immediately rushed down and took our positions in the same room while thinking of any chances of our survival or smooth sailing to the next world. Suddenly the severity of gun fight again increased and we decided not to pick up our phones which would transmit horrible firing sounds to our well wishers.

After all at around 1.15 PM the bell button at the gate of our house was pushed by the forces and the bell inside buzzed which created many apprehensions in our minds. We had no choice but to go out and open the gate. We went out together as we thought we might get hit outside now for sure and wanted to die together. We made it to the gate like soldiers while crawling over the path upto the gate amidst blasts and firing which was luckily of moderate intensity. While sitting on the sill of the gate we were asked by the forces to leave the house immediately as fight was probably going to get prolonged and severe. It was consoling as well as apprehensive for us. But we preferred to leave the colony which we did after locking our house and its gate. But then locking our house didn't matter for the forces who told us that in case of emergency they might still enter it. We had no answer.

As our car was incidentally outside our house for the night for no reasons, we jumped into it and drove away first in reverse for some distance then straight with high speed. While fleeing, my mind went to war torn zones in the



world where helpless people run for their safety bare foot with their small children on their shoulders, never to return to their ravaged towns and homes. They die of hunger in open fields with no shelter. I pay many

thanks to Allah for taking pity on us for not having created us among such unfortunate people. But I know that such unfortunate people exist in our state also whose houses get blasted to ashes and rubble and are neglected even by their immediate neighbors, not to talk of NGOs or charity foundations.

We had to take a long detour of about 6 Kms to reach my sister's house at Pirbagh, about 1.50 Kms from our place. They were thrilled and excited to receive us alive, hearty and healthy not asking about the fate of our house and belongings. It was like a reunion with our dear ones after getting free from a hostage trap with our life and property at risk. They hugged and kissed us with joyful tears rolling down from their eyes including ours to have got new lease of life.

In the evening after flashing of good news by different TV Channels about the culmination of the encounter, we went back to our colony with some apprehensions about the safety of our houses and life there. Alhamdulillah, we were very happy to know that no collateral damages in the surrounding vicinity of the camp including our colony had happened. Yes, some houses in the colony at some distance from the camp, were hit by shells and splinters piercing tin roofs and shattering window panes.

It showed to us that the areas distant from camp site are more vulnerable than the

areas in its close proximity.

Immediately after entering our house, I went to my neighbors to know their welfare. Naturally they too had been asked to flee the colony like us which was a safety measure taken by the forces for averting any human loss.

My salute to all the brave people living in our colony, and high appreciations for the forces to have acted so professionally because of which no collateral damage was caused to our lives and property. It was heartening to know there was no human loss caused to the forces also as a result of their military professionalism, though their enemy was hidden but close to their chest.

It was amazing when some officers of the BSF Camp came to our colony for enquiring about our welfare and great escape from a highly threatening situation. It enhanced our confidence in living close to the security camp. After all men in uniform are humans with humane values if insulated from dirty politics.

Contact author at:
manzoornawchoo12@gmail.com



کاشیر ستین کاشیر ساری
نیہ وارانگر حاران کاو
امین کابل



بھرشٹ

بشیر عارف

سڈر کریولکھ خاندار مرہنہ پتہ سکھ۔ "کور تاپڑھے۔ وُنہ پچھ لوکچہ، پڑھے ماروزن؟ پگاہ کیاہ کرکھ یمن؟" سو اُس کلس بیٹھ گئی بیٹھ۔ مگر لوکھٹس دہریس عتی دویم کھاندر کرنہ ناٹڑ اُس نہ بہرگز تیار۔

"یہ پچھ ژکہ بد معاش زنا نہ۔ اُمس کتہ بیہ اُمس بٹہ گانس وراے وار، تیس عتی پچھتہ جھے۔" بیٹی اُس، تیر آپہ سڈر توہمہ۔ بدری ناتھ اوس ڈاکھانس منز چہ اُس پتہ سڈر ہمسایہ روزان۔ ٹیس اوس نہ بو کھاندرے دہنمت۔ پتہ وونڈ کس سوچھ گہہ بیس تکیاز وونڈی اوس پنشن گہہ ہنس تیار۔ دیان دراصل اوس توہند مول جانکی ناتھ کھنڈواک کانڈر پتہ کثیر اوس آنت امی بہانہ۔ بدری ناتھ اوس مول موج مرہنہ پتہ سے کرایہ کمہ پتہ بیہ ڈگبل وان، ٹیس ٹہندی ماڈر مومہ گورس کرایہ روٹ اوس۔ مومہ گور گوو اڈ ژوے پتہ ترے کور بیٹھ تر اُون سڈر گورس گراہس۔ مومہ گورس پتہ اوس شاید سڈر۔ بیٹھ شکھ، سے ہیہ ماگوس۔ اڈ سڈر اوس نہ کھنڈی فکر کھسان۔ سڈر اُس پرتھ بریوار میٹھا صائبن گہہ ہان پتہ تہر ڈل عتی نو ان۔ کُنہ کُنہ لوکچہ کور یا تریو کور یو منہز کاتہ عتی

نو ان۔ اڈ بیلہ نماز پتہ واپس پھیرا، وانہ بیٹھ بیٹھ آپہ سارے اچھ درس لگان۔

"آپہ بد معاش زنا نہ نماز پتہ۔ مندھجان چھنہ۔"

"وونڈی آپہا کاتہ مسلمانس عتی پھسپہ۔ کج اُمس واز ٹس بلاہ۔" اڈ سڈر اوس نہ کانہہ اثر۔ عتی اوس بدری ناتھ پتہ لکھ

مندھج اوان پتہ زور لاگتھ۔ وونڈی اوس ٹی مومہ گور مرہنہ پتہ سڈر نشی ڈیرہ لوگمت۔

"بوڈ کاک! وارے چھو؟"

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"آہن سآمالیا وارے۔ بندگی۔ لُبو۔" بوڈ کاک اوس بے منڈ چھ پانٹھی سارِنے۔ جواب دوان۔ شاید اُس ساری مچلہ والی اُمس بُجْرک پاس کران۔ دپان اُس بوڈ کاک چھ ستہ ڈوٹ۔ مگر وُنہ چھ نوکری کران۔ یہ آسہ نا اُمی ہے تحصیلہ پیٹھ سہ لُفکیٹ اُنی ہٹ۔ ٹڈ ڈٹ آف برتھ۔

"اسہ کیاہ؟"

"نا، ہم کاک تہ چھینہ اُمس ہنہ دس ناس دوان۔ ساری ہنہ ٹل مگر یہ چھ پیٹی۔"
 کینو بو وِنوس نیران نیران "بوڈ کاک، یڈہ روزن چھینہ سیف۔ گلو اسہ سڑ۔"
 "نہ سآمالیا۔ گر مہ کھوہہ چھم گولہ سڑ مرٹے بہتر۔"

"اُمس کتہ یہ سڈر وَاے وار؟ یہ چھا بڈری ناتھ؟ یہ شاید بھر شٹ گرہتہ بدرالدین بنیومت۔ زانہ گوان۔"
 "تی مائیتو۔" بوڈ کاک دراو ہن لان تان کران۔ سڈر اوس نہ کانہہ اکھاہ کینہہ ونس بہران۔ سو اُس مکل مکل منز بدنام۔ مگر کانہہ اوس نہ تس ہنہ لگن یہ حان۔

ہیہ طرفہ اوس بوڈ کاک بے منڈ چھ پانٹھی سڈر ہنڈ گر ڈیہ دتھ۔ تس آپہ چھلان چھوکان سارے ماہ کور۔ عید آسے تہ بوڈ کاک اوس کالہ پیٹھ سو گاٹھ انان۔ تہ ہیر ڈوہ اُس سڈر بوڈ کاکنہ مکلہ گاڈ تہ کلبیہ تیار کران۔ ووڈی اوس یہ گر مکل منز چکلہ نا وزانہ یوان۔ لُس تہ پکھ ہا، نہ اوس ہیئس اِشاہ کر تھ ہاوان "یہ گوو سڈر ہنڈ چکلہ۔"

مگر کانہہ اکھاہ اوس نہ اتھ زیادہ تمیت دوان۔ تکیا بوڈ کاکس اُس ساری بُجْرک لچاٹھ کران۔

"دپان بوڈ کاک چھ بیمار۔ توے چھینہ مٹھو کینو وودو ہو پیٹھ نظر گرہ حان۔"

"ترتھ رٹھس سا، اسہ کیاہ؟"

مشد صوفس پیٹھ اُس نمازی ہتھ چھلتے مشد بچ گوڈنی اُنزراوان۔ یمن وان مشد بچ۔ ہم گرہن تہ نمازیر نہ مگر گوڈ کران صوفس پیٹھ لکھ ہنز غائب۔ ہیہ ہیلہ موضوع آسہ بوڈ ہنہ۔ یمن چھ یوان غائب کر نس کچس دن اتھ۔

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وق کو نیران۔ سڈر کوز دون کورین کھاندر۔ بوڈ کاک اوس یزمن ہندی پائٹھی ہیر یون کران دستار عجاہ دتھہ تہ زیوٹھ سیندر یوک کر تھہ۔
 سڈر اوس نہ مجلہ منیر کانہہ سالیس آمنت۔ حالانکہ سارنہ اوسن زانہ مردس پڑھمنت۔ مگر کانہہ اکھاہ آس نہ۔
 دپان بوڈ کاک اوس میٹا صائیس اتانس نکلہ مندرس منزکنے زون آرتی کران۔ تہ اڈ کرکھ مہراز مہرنہ بیتھ روانہ۔
 "کوسہ ونہ ونہ اوس سڈر؟ پوڑ مسلمان قومس تھاوون پام۔ ہنہ گانس پھر پانس سڈر تہتہ۔ مائیس برابر پھنس۔ اڈ منہ پھہ پھنس
 نہ گرهان۔"

بوڈ کاک زن اوس ووڈی کوٹھ پوومت۔ ترے رتھہ اوس رنایر گائیس گائیس۔ اکہ دوہ صہبائے دراو لور ڈکھوان۔ سڈر ونوس "پیراہ
 کیاہ مجبوری تھہ۔"

"نہ بی مجبوری تھم۔"

"پیر کیاہ مجبوری؟ قدم تہ چھکھ نہ ہیرکان کڈتھہ۔"

"علی محمد وائیس تھم سمکھن۔" بوڈ کاک وو تھنس۔ تہ امہ پتہ ووت علی محمد وائی سندگر۔ آنگن پر ٹاوتھک کرنے۔ علی محمد نہ زانہ
 پیہہ نظر۔

"یہ ہنہ دلہ کتھ لوگ سانس گرس بلا یہ صہبائے؟"

علی محمد دراو بوڈ کاکس بیتھہ۔ "بوڈ کاک، کیاہ ڈلیل؟"

"اندر تھم نا اجازتھہ؟"

علی محمدس گوو شاید بجزک پاس۔ "ولو، ولو۔" تہ ژونن کھنس منز۔

بھروکھ سنبالنے کڈ بوڈ کاکن بلیہ منز پھنچے ہن تہ تراون علی محمدس برو نہہ کتہ۔

"علی بگرا، ڈشوبکھ مے اولاد۔ یم چھی میانی گرتھوئی تہ کمیو ٹینگی پاتہہ۔ روپیس ترے لچھہ تہ شیتھ ساس۔ یہ تھاوتہ پانس نش

امانت۔"

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सँदर आँस प्रथ ब्रसवारि मीशा सॉबुन गछान तु तहरि डुल सुत्य तुलान। कुनि कुनि ल्वकचि कोरि या त्रेयव कोर्यव मंजु काँसि सुत्य निवान। अदु येलि न्यमाज़ पॅरिथ वापस फेरिहा, वानु पॅजव प्यठु आसु सारेय अँछ दरस लगान।

‘आयि बदमाश जनानु न्यमाज़ पॅरिथ। मंदुछान छे नु।’

‘व्वन्य आसिहा काँसि मुसलमानस सुत्य फसेमुच़! लॅज अँमिस वाज़ु बटस बलायि।’

अदु सँदरि ओस नु कांह असर। सुती ओस बद्दी नाथ ति लुकु मंदछि ओन तु ज़ोर लॉगिथ। व्वन्य ओस तँम्य म्वमु गूर मरनु पतु सँदरि निशी डेरु लोगमुत।

‘ब्वदु काक, वारय छिवु?’

‘आहन सॉ माल्या वारय। बंदुगी। लॅसिव।’
ब्वदु काक ओस बे-मंदुछ पॉठ्य सारिनुय जवाब दिवान। शायद आँस्य सॉरी मँहलु वॉल्य अँमिस बुजिरुक पास करान। दपान आँस्य, ब्वदु काक छु सतुथि डोलमुत मगर वुनि छु नोकरी करान। यि आसि ना अँम्य यिहय तहसीलु प्यठु सारटिफिकेट अँनिमुच़, चूर डेट आफ बर्थुच।

‘असि क्याह?’

‘ना यिम काक ति छिनु अँमिस बटु दलास टास कडान। सॉरी बटु चँल्य मगर यि छु येती।’

केंचव बटव वन्न्योस नेरान नेरान ‘ब्वदु काक, येति रोजुन छुनु सेफ। पक्किव असि सुत्य।’

‘न सॉ माल्या। गरमु खौतु छुम गोलि सुती मरुन बेहतर।’

‘अँमिस कति यियि सँदरि वरॉय वार। यि छा

बद्दी नाथ? यि छु शायद भ्रष्ट गँछिथ बद्र-दीन बन्न्योमुत। ज्ञानि बगवान!’

‘ती मॉन्यतव।’ ब्वदु काक द्राव बटन लान तान करान। सँदरि ओस नु कांह अखाह केंह वनुनस बँहरान। स्व आँस मँहल्य मँहलस मंजु बदनाम। मगर कांह ओस नु तस बुथि लगुन यछान।

बेयि तरफु ओस ब्वदु काक बे-मंदुछ पॉठ्य सँदरि हुंदि गरि डेरु दिथ। तस आसु छलान छ्वकान सारेय माजि कोरि। ईद आसि हा तु ब्वदु काक ओस कालु प्यठय सोगाठ अनान। तु हेरच़ द्वह आँस सँदरु ब्वदु काकुनि म्वखु गाडु तु वॅगलियु तैयार करान। व्वन्य ओस यि गुरु मँहलस मंजु चकलु नावु ज्ञाननु यिवान। युस ति पकि हा, सु ओस बेयिस इशारु वॅगरिथ हावान ‘यि गव सँदरि हुंद चकलु।’

मगर कांह अखाह ओस नु अथ ज़्यादु अहमियत दिवान। तिव्याज़ि ब्वदु काकस आँस्य सॉरी बुजरुक लिहाज़ु करान।

‘दपान ब्वदु काक छु ब्यमार। तवय छुनु पॅतिम्यव केंचव द्वहव प्यठु नज़रि गछान।’

‘त्रठ छुनुस सॉ, असि क्याह?’

मँश्यदि सोफस प्यँठ आँस्य न्यमॉज़्य बुथ छँलिथ मँश्यदि बिच्य ग्वडु यी अँज़रावान। यिमन वनान मँश्यदि बिच्य। यिम गछन तु न्यमाज़ परनि, मगर ग्वडु करन सोफस प्यठ लुकु हुंज़ गॉबथ। बेयि येलि मोज़ूह आसि ब्वदु बटु, यिमन छु यिवान गॉबथ करुनस कमचस दन अथि।

वक गव नेरान। सँदरि कोरु द्वन कोर्यन खांदर। ब्वदु काक ओस यँज़मनु सुंछ पॉठ्य हेरि ब्वन करान दस्तारु पँजाह दिथ, तु ज़्यूठ सँदरि ट्योकाह

वॅरिथ।

सॅदरि ओस नु मॅहलु मंज़ु कांह ति सालस आमुत। हालांकि सारिनय ओसुख ज़नानि मर्दस प्रुछमुत। मगर कांह अखाह आस नु।

दपान ब्दु काक ओस मीशा सॉबुनिस अस्तानस नख्रु मंदुरस मंज़ कुनुय ज़ोन आरती करान तु अदु वॅरिख माहराज़, माहरिनि ह्यथ रवानु।

‘क्वसु वुनु वॅछ अॅमिस सॅदरि? पूर मुसलमान कौमस थॅवुन पाम। बटु गानस छे पानस सुत्य रॅटिथ। मॉलिस बराबर छुस। अदु, मंदछ छस नु गछान।’

ब्दु काक ज़न ओस वुन्य क्वाठि प्योमुत। त्रे र्यथ ऑसिस रिटायर गॉमतिस् गॉमुत्य। अकि दूह सुबहॉय द्राव लूर डखवान। सॅदरि वन्योस ‘यीचाह क्या मजबूरी छय?’

‘न बी, मजबूरी छम।’

‘यीच क्याह? मजबूरी? कदम ति छुख नु ह्यकान वॅगडिथ।’

‘अली मुहम्मद वॉनिस छुम समखुन।’ ब्दु काक वोथुस। तु अमि पतु वोत ब्दु काक अली मुहम्मद वॉन्य सुंद गरु। आंगन बरु चाव ठख करुनय। अलि मुहम्मदुनि ज़नानि पेयि नज़र।

‘यि बटु दलु कथ लोग सॉनिस गरस बलायि सुबहॉय?’

अली मुहम्मद द्राव ब्दु काकस बुथि। ‘ब्दु काक, क्याह दॅलील?’

‘अंदर छुम ना इजाज़थ?’

अली मुहम्मदस गव शायद बुजिरुक पास। ‘वॅलिव, वॅलिव।’ तु चोनुन कुठिस मंज़।

फ़ख संबालुनय वॅड ब्दु काकन बेबि मंज़ु फुटजि हेन तु त्रॉवन अली मुहम्मदस ब्रॉह कनि।

‘अली जिगरा, चु शूबख मे औलाद। यिम छी म्यॉन्य ग्रेच्युटी तु वॅग्न्यूटेशनुक्य पाँसु। रोपुयस त्रे लछ तु शीथ सास। यि थावतु पानस निश अमानत।’

‘अथ क्याह छु मे करुन?’ अली मुहम्मदन वोनस हॉरानुगी सान।

‘अॅमिस सॅदरि चारि मा छि अक्ल। अॅमिस अथि अगर व्वन्य दिमु, अॅमिस ख्यन यि ज़ामतुर्य, तु त्रेयिम कूर रोज्यस नेतरु रोस। पथ कुन अँज़ुरोव मे दून हुंद खांदर पानय। मगर व्वन्य छुम बासान, पॅतिम गॅर छे मे प्यारान। अथ रकुमस वॅर्यजि रॉछ तु यि त्रेयिम तु पॅतिम कोरि हन वॅर्यज्यन चुय खांदरु खॉतरु रवानु। बु छुस बॅल्य बटु माम। सॅदरि हय पनुन बोय आसि हा, लुकु पामन मा लगिहा। बु ओसुस बॅल्य बटु माम।’ यी वनान द्राव ब्दु काक।

अली मुहम्मद ओस गरिक्यन बॉचन यी बोज़ुनावान। हंगु मंगु गॅयि क्रेख। सॅदरु ऑस क्रेख दिवान ‘हा बायो! हा बटु नावस लगुया बायो! ✱



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rainamk1@yahoo.co.in

Wahab Khaar

Born at Khrew Shaar, Pampore, Wahab Khaar was a great Sufi poet of 19th century. His year of birth is not exactly known but it is believed that he died in the year 1910. He is believed to have lived for about a hundred years. Wahab Khaar was the desciple of Sabir Sahib, a great Sufi Poet himself. Wahab Khaar's father Hait Khaar was also a Sufi saint and poet.

Wahab Khaar is said to have spent most of his time in the company of Faqees. The name itself reveals that he was a blacksmith by profession. He was also a farmer and a singer. He was handsome and his earnings allowed him to wear costly clothes and live a comfortable life in a time when people of Kashmir were living in bad condition and could not even fulfill their daily requirements.

It is said that Wahab Khaar smoked Charas at times. He was married to a pious lady named Rehmat who assisted and served him whole life.

[Source: facebook.com]

جائے کتیبو چھے
وہاب کھار



چھم چانی سیٹھاہ ماے تیو
جائے کتیبو چھے
دورن تڑ مو مار گراے تیو، جائے کتیبو چھے
بیٹہ نا درن پائے تیو
سرن سبزی چھے
کا تڑ زؤنہ کا ستم گراے تیو، جائے کتیبو چھے
ڈیکس منزی چھے جائے تیو
سوے لیکھنے چھے
تم چھی حرف ڈاے تیو، جائے کتیبو چھے
گوناہ تہ ثواب آے تیو
ترکر تو لیم دے
تتھ کور کن لگہ گراے تیو، جائے کتیبو چھے
کم کم سلیمان آے تیو
کتہ حاتم طے
دوراه کرتھ دراے تیو، جائے کتیبو چھے
سبم بیٹہ بوسہ دراے تیو
تم نہ پھیر تھ آے
عبدال وہابس راءے تیو، جائے کتیبو چھے

जाय कत्यो छय

वहाब खार

Wahab Khaar



छम चॉन्य स्यठाह माय मत्यो
जाय कत्यो छय
दूरन चु मो मार ग्राय मत्यो, जाय कत्यो छय
येति ना दरन-पाय मत्यो
सरन सब्जी छय
काचु जूनि कासतम ग्राय मत्यो, जाय कत्यो छय
ड्यकस मंज छय जाय मत्यो
स्वय मे लेखुनय छय
तिम छी हरफ डाय मत्यो, जाय कत्यो छय
ग्वनाह तु सवाब आयि मत्यो
त्रकर तोल्यम दय
तथ कोर कुन लागि ग्राय मत्यो, जाय कत्यो छय
कम कम सुलैमान आय येत्यो
कति हातम तय
दोराह वॅरिथ द्राय मत्यो, जाय कत्यो छय
यिम येमि बवसरु द्राय मत्यो
तिम नु फीरिथ आय
अब्दुल वहाबस राय मत्यो, जाय कत्यो छय

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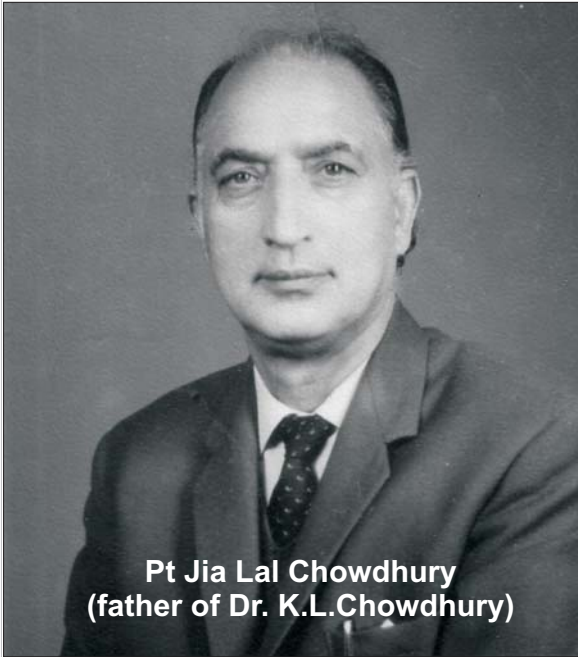
[Source: facebook.com]

My Medical Journey - Dr. K.L.Chowdhury

An Old Remedy By An Old Hand

Father had diarrhoea for two days. There was no pain, vomiting or fever. He felt quite weak. Frequent visits to the toilet, which was across the veranda from his bedroom, exhausted him. I prescribed pthalyl sulfathalazole, the drug in vogue for diarrhoea. However, on the third morning, when I walked into his room to find out how he had fared during the night, he looked at me with an expression of boredom and concern – a look that also seemed to say, “Hey son, your treatment doesn't seem to help!”

I empathized with him. Father was not used to lying in bed during day time. After he had argued his last case of the day in the courts, he would rush home to be with family. He liked his evening tea served in the garden where he always found work to do with the plants. Inside, he enjoyed reading books or



Pt Jia Lal Chowdhury
(father of Dr. K.L. Chowdhury)

playing patience, asking mother for a cup of kehva now and then, moving out again into the lawn for short strolls. To be deprived of this luxury for two days was intolerable. He had grown weary of the bed and craved for his office and garden.



“Is there no other medicine in your pharmacopoeia that might help reduce my forays to the toilet?” he asked, as I sat by his side. His tone was more of a plea for help than a grievance.

“I feel we should give it till tomorrow, father,” I replied in an assuring tone.

The year was nineteen sixty seven. In fact, by then, there was hardly much in the pharmacopoeia for acute diarrhoeas beyond pthalyl sulfathalazole, and clioquinol, a widely prescribed drug which was later withdrawn because long time use caused serious neurological side effects. Since most acute diarrhoeas are self limiting, treatment was mostly empirical, fluids being the mainstay in the management, even as oral re-hydration therapy was unknown then. Some doctors prescribed other palliatives and bowel binders.

Father was not dehydrated. I ensured that he drank plenty of fluids – limewater, *lassi*, tea. Mother crushed *hak* and *palak* and cooked them to serve him with rice. She made soup of soybeans that was a staple for loose motions. I was not overly worried, and left for my work.

That evening, I returned from the hospital straight to father's bedroom to inquire how he had progressed during the day. He wore a faint grin and gestured with a gentle shake of his

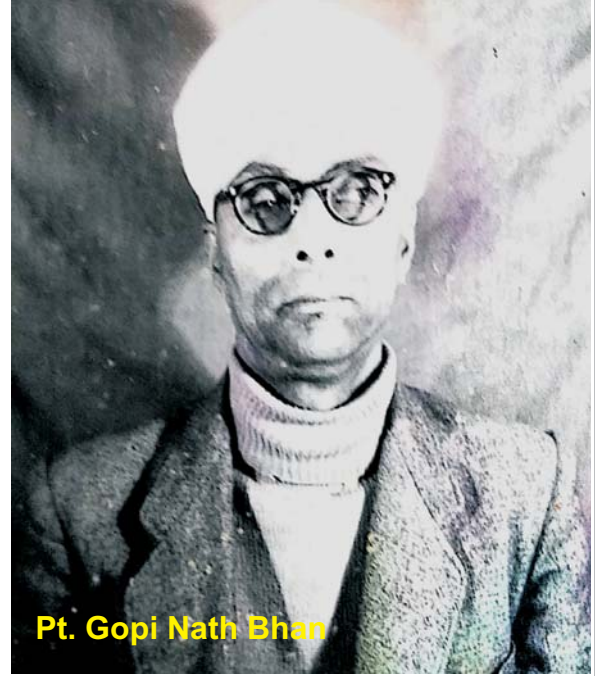
head that said, “I know you are trying your very best, but it doesn't seem to work.”

I moved near him, felt his pulse, looked at the skin turgor, checked his blood pressure and palpated his abdomen. Everything felt normal. The frequent visits to the toilet had certainly rendered him weak and demoralized. I was reminded of a senior colleague who never failed to warn us of the challenges and heartaches of treating your own family. But I started practice on my own people and have continued it ever since.

I cancelled my evening clinic and decided to spend time with father, to give him company and help lift his spirits. I asked Ashok, our domestic help, to serve tea in father's bed room. Meanwhile, I engaged him in a game of rummy. We sat sipping tea and chatting, when Pandit Gopi Nath dropped by. He was the head dispenser at the Government Chest Disease Hospital, and ran a private evening pharmacy where he treated patients suffering from common ailments. He had been our neighbour and family doctor when we lived at Rajveri Kadal. Four years earlier, in the spring of 1963, we had moved to Barbarshah Road, but he often paid us a visit because of his long association with father even as he had ceased to be the family physician. Since I graduated, the mantle of treating my kin fell on me, and never was Gopi Nath consulted again. In fact, it was time to pay back; I was his family physician now. I was the first qualified medical graduate from the neighbourhood. I had also specialized as an internist, and word had spread that since I was apprenticed to the legendary Dr. Ali Jan, some of his skills must have rubbed off on me.

Gopi Nath was dressed in a shirt, pyjama, vest and turban. Born with a squint, he was of lean built, calm demeanour, soft speech. He was a perfect gentleman and the epitome of a healer in our childhood days.

Father beamed with joy on seeing him. “Look who is here!” he exclaimed.



Pt. Gopi Nath Bhan

They exchanged pleasantries, and father related the details of his illness when Gopi Nath asked why he was in bed.

“I am sure you will recover soon,” he said, and, after a pause, “you don't have to worry; you are in the very good hands of your worthy son.”

A cup of tea was poured for Gopi Nath; a hot *telwaroo* served on a plate. Father passed him the hookah and he started pulling at leisure, spewing jets of smoke through his nostrils, looking pensively at the floor.

Gopi Nath spent a full hour with father while I consumed tea and read the newspaper. They talked about old times at Rajveri Kadal, about their younger days, about their children and about the political climate. In the meanwhile, father paid two visits to the toilet. When he lay in bed again, he looked at Gopi Nath and addressed him endearingly, “Hey, Gupa, how about writing me a prescription like old times?”

Gopi Nath was nonplussed. He pulled

harder at the hookah, looking uncomfortably from father to me and back. Father looked away from me, suddenly realizing that he might have inadvertently annoyed me by asking Gopi Nath for a prescription when he was already under my care.

There was an awkward silence. I knew father did not mean to slight me. He spoke instinctively, just at the spur of the moment, and from the tedium and exhaustion of having to visit the rest room repeatedly. After all, Gopi Nath had been his physician all through before I came into the picture.

Gopi Nath had been our family physician as far back as I could remember and had treated us often for colds and coughs, fevers and body aches, abdominal pains and diarrhoeas. He was a fatherly figure, always kind, considerate, and affable. He would visit us whenever we were down with fever, prescribe his mixtures and, as was the practice those days, enforce a fast until the fever subsided even as we pined for food. Pointing to the hill across my window, he would say, “Get well soon, my boy; you have to be strong enough to carry me on your back yonder to Hari Parbat hill. That will be my fee for getting you well.”

How could I feel offended if this genial family physician and friend wrote the formula he prescribed for us so often in our childhood? I did not remember having been let down by his mixtures even once. I fondly recalled the half pint bottles in which his assistant would dispense the mixture after reading out the ingredients from his prescription, measuring portions from large one-litre jars of various tinctures, spirits, and extracts. Then, he would paste a strip of paper cut in six small hexagonal shapes on one side of the bottle up to the level of the fluid. One hexagon designated one dose. The bottle would last two to three days. Sometimes a refill was necessary. Tinctures of belladonna, opium, cinnamon, cardamom, etc were the usual

ingredients in the mixtures for diarrhoea, abdominal pain and distension.

I addressed Gopi Nath reverentially, “It is fine if we try your prescription on father. After all, you know his system for decades; I know it only for six years.”

He pulled harder at the hookah, looking uncertainly at me through the cloud of smoke. His squint became more pronounced.

There was a long, uncomfortable silence.

I shouted for Ashok and asked him to fetch my prescription pad and pen.

Gopi Nath looked at me, embarrassed. “I am sure he will be fine with the medicine you have prescribed. It takes three to four days for diarrhoea to settle in his case. He should be well by tomorrow,” he commiserated.

Ashok came with a pad and pen. I handed it over to Gopi Nath.

“Please write the prescription,” I asked gently, earnestly.

Reluctantly, he set the hookah aside, took the pen and the pad, wrote carefully, legibly, slowly, and handed it over to me uncertainly. Without reading it, I passed it on to Ashok and asked him to buy the mixture from the local pharmacy.

Gopi Nath stood up to take our leave. “Hey, Gupa, what would you say to *dodie kaer* for my dinner. That is what you used recommend in these situations,” father asked him.

Gopi Nath looked at me.

I knew that father fancied *dodie kaer*, a popular curry made with yoghurt and gram flour. Mother had a special recipe.

I looked back at Gopi Nath and smiled in affirmation.

“Yes, that would be fine with you,” Gopi Nath replied, nodding his head in approval and wishing father a speedy recovery.

As I walked with Gopi Nath to see him off,

Continued on Page 35

Master Zinda Kaul

The Great Kashmiri Poet - Prof. Kanwar K. Kaul

Some less known anecdotes from his life



Reverently addressed as 'Masterji', as a teacher at Schools in Kashmir, Master Zinda Kaul was a poet and wrote in Kashmiri, Urdu, Persian, Hindi and English. He started writing in 1942 and excelled in Kashmiri devotional poetry. His famous 'Simran' is evidence in point. He was a recipient of the Sahitya Academy national literary award in 1956.

My father's highly respected teacher and mentor at school, Masterji, would often be among the honored guests at our home. He was a teacher 'par excellence' and was referred to by the English residents in Kashmir as 'Zinda the translator' for his command of the English language and the ability to translate it into vernacular. He had a keen sense of wit and humor. He used to do yogic exercises, one of which was standing on his head (*Shirsha aasan*). Once he slipped in this posture and hurt his neck. When people asked him how he had hurt himself he did not wish to reveal that he indulged in this exercise, yet he would never tell a lie. His answer was he was on his 'heir' (which in Kashmiri means 'head' as well as 'stairs'), and fell. He let people believe that he fell on the stairs.

A rich Persian visiting Kashmir, Mr Shirazi, had a medical problem and sought my father's advice. During his conversation with him, my father gave him an account of Kashmiri language and the contribution of 'Farsi' (Persian) to it. He told him that Kashmir had produced some Persian poets and quoted from *Parmanand* who was hard of hearing and wrote with a pun upon words using the word *karam* which in Persian, means deaf as well as God's grace and mercy.

In his prayer to God, Permanand complains to Him saying "I prayed for your blessings and not to make me deaf."

Hami guftan ki mara karam kun

Na mee guftan ki mara karam kun

While quoting the poet, my father misquoted the term '*na mee guftan*' and instead said '*na mun guftan*.' Mr Shirazi pointed out that the verses were not balanced (in weight). Disappointed, my father went to Masterji and narrated the story. Masterji's prompt and witty comment was 'how could the two lines of the verse be balanced in scale when you put a '*mun*' (maund-measure of weight) in the second line!"



Masterji bore hardships in life and served as a teacher and later as a clerk. Once travelling in a 'Doonga' (boat), the '*Haakh*' he was eating with rice was too spicy hot. Without complaining to the host he would quietly dip it in the river to dilute it and then eat it - such was his humility. Yet at another occasion at home, the chutney he was served with food had no salt. Complaining to his mother, she apologized "*balai laguy noon gome mashit*". In Kashmiri written in the Urdu/

Persian script, the last alphabet in '*chetin*' is '*noon*' and without this last alphabet it reads '*Chet*' which in Kashmiri means helplessness or compulsion. He promptly retorted in Kashmiri: "*teli gai chet*". Such prompt retorts are possible only from intellectuals. People do make remarks, but such quick, prompt and witty humor is rare.

Contact author at : kanwarkaul@gmail.com

Literature & Culture - Upender Ambardar

Sancha - Ancient Treatise of Himachal

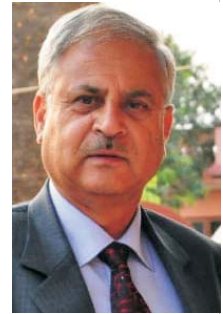
A Glorious Gift from Kashmir

In the times bygone Kashmir excelled in many spheres of art, literature and culture, in which it achieved great heights.

The cross Cultural-religious strands that stretched between Kashmir and Himachal Pradesh successfully withstood the centuries old time-wrap and refused to fade-away into oblivion. Apart from the natural brilliance of the landscapes, both states share the deep-rooted faith of the people in the time tested traditions, belief systems and ancient wisdom, which are enshrined in the holy scriptures. They form an integral part of our common heritage.

The ancient Sancha scripture of Himachal Pradesh is an illustrious example of the same. It is a combination of Jyotish and tantric knowledge. Even today, in the present scientific age, this ancient priceless knowledge is quite popular in Shimla, Sirmour and Solan areas of Himachal Pradesh. The 'Sancha Granth' is believed to have travelled to Himachal Pradesh from Kashmir hundreds of years back. The present day custodians of this ancient legacy, who are natives of Himachal Pradesh are believed to be the descendants of Kashmiri Brahmans. The 'Sancha' treatise is a unique combination of 'Mantra' (sacred incantations), 'Yantra' (hallowed implements) and 'Tantra' (mystical hymns or invocations). The scripts of Sancha treatise are known by the names of

'Bhatakshri' or 'Pabuchi', which are Himachali variations of 'Shardha', the ancient language of Kashmir. In earlier times, the said script was also known as 'Takri'.



In Himachal Pradesh, in addition to 'Bhatakshri' and 'Pabuchi', the ancient 'Takri' dialect has survived in many resembling forms like 'Chambyali', 'Kalluvi' Mandyali' and 'Sirmouri' etc., which are the present day spoken dialects of Chamba, Kallu Mandi and Sirmour areas of Himachal Pradesh. In earlier times, the scholarly and learned Himachali Brahmans were known as 'Pabuch' due to their demonstrative grip and hold over the ancient 'Sancha' knowledge.

The 'Sancha' growth deals with a wide range of topics ranging from necromancy, black magic fall-out from the witchcraft, occult effects and negative influences of evil spirits besides demonology. The 'Sancha' text offers solutions and remedies to the persons who are troubled by the negative influences of the above. In addition to it, all those persons, who are saddled by anxieties and worries arising out



Sancha Scripture

of afflictions by various ailments can find health assuring remedies by consulting 'Sancha' system.

The 'Sancha' treatise also guarantees a triumph over one's 'hidden' enemies by recitation of certain '*mantras*' i.e. secret incantations.

Its help is also sought in adopting a religious recourse to the matters connected with almost all the Hindu *Sanskars* right from birth to death. In addition to it, 'Sancha' knowledge also aids in the recovery of stolen items by giving clues and hints about the identity of the thief, the time of the occurrence of the theft and number of persons involved in the act. An accurate and exact knowledge of the auspicious timing or '*Hora*' is also possible by consulting 'Sancha' text.

The word 'Sancha' owes its origin to the Sanskrit word '*Sanch*' or '*Sanchai*', which means a repository or a compilation.

The Brahmans well-versed with the 'Sancha' knowledge are called 'Pabuchi' or '*Baat*'. In addition to 'Pabuchi' or 'Bhatakshri' dialects, the 'Sancha' texts are also found in '*Chandvani*', '*Pandvani*' and '*Butakhshri*' dialects.

The script employed by the Brahmans of the 'Panda' sect is called 'Pandvani', while as the inscription used by the Brahmans of the 'Bhat' sect is known by the name of 'Bhatakshri'. According to a legend, an ancient ruler of the erstwhile Sirmour Kingdom came under the spell of a curse by a female dancer. As a consequence, the capital of the ancient kingdom of Sirmour was completely submerged under water and the royalty became kingless.

Depressed by the loss of entire royal clan and to ensure a new heir to the Sirmour throne, two ministers of the Kingdom namely Roymoan and Roy Gopal are said to have travelled all the way from Sirmour to Srinagar, the capital of Kashmir in the eleventh century A.D.

The two Sirmour ministers are believed to have requested the then Kashmir King to send a Kashmiri Prince, who can take charge of the Sirmour Kingdom.

According to the legend, out of the two queens of the then Kashmiri King, one had an adopted son, while as the second one named Sumitra was in a family way at that time. In pursuance of the then prevalent bestowal of alms custom, the King of Kashmir agreed to send his pregnant queen in the form of 'Shaya Daan' to the princely state of Sirmour. In furtherance of it and to facilitate the subsequent coronation of the Kashmiri Prince as a King of Sirmour, the queen Sumitra of Kashmir went to Sirmour. She was accompanied by a host of *Rishis*, saints, learned Brahmans, bards, artists and minstrels, in addition to numerous footmen and domestics. The accompanying Kashmiri Brahmans are said to have carried with them their prized possession the 'Sancha' knowledge system. In the historical documents of Himachal, this notable event is recorded in the following lines "Loia Aana Mangtoo, *Purohit Sath Loia Aana Raoy Baat Loia Aana Vikram Samvat Saat thi todi 1152 Mahina Magh.*" It fully affirms and supports the historical fact that the carriers of the 'Sancha' treatise or knowledge to Himachal Pradesh were none other than the Kashmiri Pandits. Corresponding to the above *Vikram Samvat*, the exact year of the said event can be said to be 1095AD.

The Kashmiri origin of the 'Sancha' treatise is further collaborated by the fact that even today before consulting the 'Sancha' text, Himachali Brahmans pay obeisance to Kashmir in the following lines, "Vidhya Suri Kashmiri Lagan *dekh Shodan Vichar*".

The Sancha Granth has a detailed information about astrology, planetary placements, interpretation of Zodiac and planetary movements. Based on the intricate knowledge of 'Sancha Granth', the 'Pabuchi'

scholars prepare a local variation of almanac (*Jantri*) called '*Chri*'. The three important components of '*Chri*' are '*Var*' i.e. day of the week or an occasion, '*Tithi*' i.e. a lunar day or date and the planetary movements and their positions.

The '*Chiri*' is based on the solar planetary system, which regards Baisakhi as the first day of the New Year. To get solutions, answers and remedies for the different paradoxes that rock the day to day life, the '*Sancha*' text is always consulted for the required help. Resembling a gambling dice, the '*pasha*' or '*pasa*' is employed in deciphering the required information from the '*Sancha*' text. The '*pasha*' or '*pasa*' has an inscription of four numerical digits marked as 0,00,000 and 0000, which have the corresponding numerical strength of 1,2,3 and 4 respectively.

These numerical digits are marked on the individual pages separately. Each numerical digit with an individual value of sixteen '*Horas*' make a sum total of sixty four '*Horas*', with one '*Hora*' being equal to one twenty fourth part of a day.

The '*Pashas*' or '*Pasa*' are specially prepared only on auspicious days and involve elaborate religious rituals. The different '*Horas*' that are in-vogue in the '*Sancha* Granth' are known as '*Kaalgaymi Hora*', '*Bhoot Prashan Hora*', '*Lagan Ki Hora*' and '*Tithi Ki Hora*' etc. The square shaped '*pasha*' or '*pasa*' is usually made up of an elephant tooth, being 1½ to 2 inches in length and with a width of a finger.

According to a belief in Sirmour area, the '*Yantra*' and '*Lagans*' made from the soil brought from the village Chanan, give better results while consulting '*Sancha*' text. The Brahmins engaged in the '*Sancha*' profession take every care to maintain the knowledge secrecy and imparting of it's knowledge is confined only within the family.

The Kashmiri origin of the '*Sancha*' text

has also been acknowledged by Sh. Sudershan Vashisht, who is a well known author and researcher of Himachal Pradesh and has done note-worthy research work in this direction.

The ancient and precious '*Sancha*' texts are also found in tehsil Chopal, tehsil Shilayi and Chakrota area of Uttar Pradesh.

Pandit Om Prakash and Pandit Devi Ram, the native Brahmins of the village Khadanka in Sirmour are experts in '*Sancha*' knowledge and it's system.

Another Brahmin named Pandit Shivanand, a resident of the village *Janloag* in Sirmour has also thorough knowledge of '*Sancha*' texts. He makes accurate predictions based on its knowledge. Pt. Mohan Lal, a native of the village Dehar in Sirmour is a well-known name due to his thorough and intimate '*Sancha*' knowledge.

Undoubtedly, '*Sancha*' is an ancient and sacred 'knowledge of Kashmiri origin, which is a historical cultural heritage. It is a glorious part of our rich past and a proud contribution of Kashmiri Brahmins, who have left an indelible mark on the pages of history.

Contact author at :
upenderambardar@gmail.com

हना सूचिव !!

शुर्यन कथ छु राह खारुन ?

तोह्य छिवु तिमन सुत्य काँशिर्य पाँठ्य कथ

करान ? शुर्यन सुती योत क्या ? तोह्य छिवु

पनुनि वाँसि हुँद्यन सुत्य ति काँशिर्य पाँठ्य कथ

करान ।

हना सूचिव !

काँशुर ज़बान किथु पाँठ्य रोज़ि ज़िंद ?

Preserving Culture - Our Customs, Rites & Rituals

Marriage Rituals of Kashmiri Pandits

- Vishal Raina

Marriage Rituals

Match making. An extract of the boy's horoscope (Tekni) is made public. The girl's side who find it matching and meets their specifications, approach boy's side for the alliance.

Kath Baath . To formalise the alliance, a party of males from the boy's side meets a party from the girl's side at a place fixed by the latter. After tea and snacks, bouquets are exchanged to signify the acceptance of marriage proposal on both sides. The date of marriage is fixed.

Marriage ceremony - Livun. House cleaning is done few days before the marriage, formally with some feasting and distribution of Ver, a concoction of rice, condiments and sheep entrails or walnut. Colour mottifs are put on entrance gate (Krool). Now-a-days this function is done more formally a day before the ceremony proper starts,



while a pseudo livun is done earlier.

Mainzrath. It is the night when Mehandi is applied on the hands / feet of the groom / bride by her father's sister. It is also offered to



guests. Singing takes place all night, often supported by professional singing and dancing parties (Bacha-nagma).

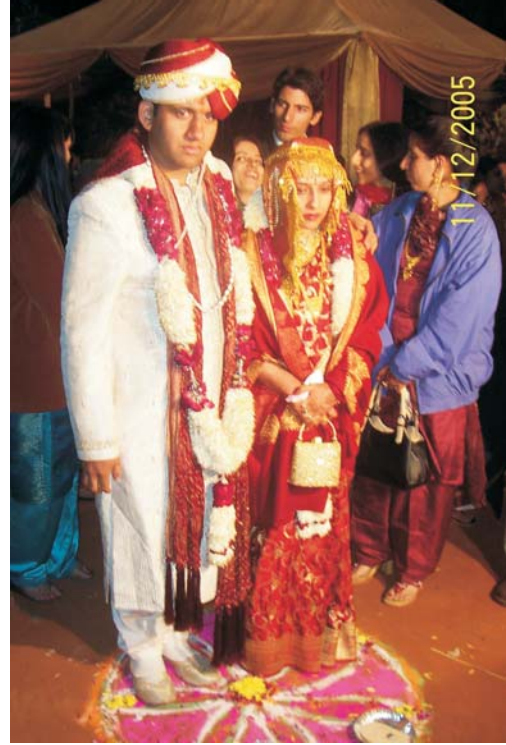
Devgon. A long pooja (longer in case of





girls) is a religious preparatory ceremony. Father gifts all jewellery and utensils etc to his daughter ceremonially at this function. Kheer as prasad is distributed on the occasion.

Marriage proper. Grooms wear a kesari colour turban (Dastaar) which is tied by the uncles. The elder lady of the house bids them bye on a Vyueg (a rangoli like round, coloured pattern on ground) with feeding of candy. No musicals accompany the party except a conche shell. On arrival at the bride's place, he is again welcome by the elder lady of the house on a Vyueg (of course this time together with the bride) with an aarti with lamps made of rice flour and feeding of candy. Although some have introduced Jaimala (Vijaymala) exchange recently, majority of people



would instead have Mananmaal (Mala of agreement) tied as the bride was not by vijay (conquest) but by agreement. The guests (Baraat) are entertained to a meal, usually a lunch as morning marriages are more common than night ones. The food served is vegetarian since early 1930 when Pt. Hargopal, a reformer made it a norm. The marriage proper is performed by the priests and can take anything upto five hours. It starts with the groom worshipping at the doorway to the bride's home (Dwara pooza). In the ceremony, the most important part is when the couple takes seven steps together and also when they are worshipped with flowers by the relatives of the bride as if they are embodiments of God and Goddess (Posha pooza). The bride and groom feed each other ceremonially (Dai-

batta). The food for that is paid for by the groom's side, so are all the requirements at the ceremony, the responsibility of the groom's side. Even the cosmetics and the outer robe for the bride is provided by the groom's side. Farewell again is at the Vyueg, in the same manner as the welcome. The



again visits the bride's house (except on a Saturday) and have the ceremonial dinner before leaving back.

[Source : Zaan Archives]

Contact author at :
vishalraina3d@gmail.com



groom along with his bride is welcome back at his place again on the Vyueg. The groom's sister ritually bars their entry to the house which is allowed after she is promised a gift by the groom (Zaam Braand). They are then led to the kitchen when the mother-in-law after finally seeing her daughter-in-law (Maetemur) entertains them to some food while they sit on the hearth. All the women at this stage sing in the joy of the arrival of the new bride.

Sat-raat. The same night, the couple



*Poetry - Dr. Mudasir Firdosi***Book of Life**

Book of life on the ledge,
dusty, full of memories.
The kid in me smiled,
Is that really you?

Remember the days when
it was fun to be home,
lazing all day around,
and no worries known.

Gobbling the cream from the milk pot,
feigning it was never you!
Keeping mum when mum inquired.
That day, going to the shop,
buying biscuits on credit
taking your dad's name,
devouring the biscuits fast on the run.

Running wild in the fields,
falling from a tree branch with a thud.
Broken arm hanging low,
fun was, however, worth the pain.

Those days, happiness, lived
within us unconditionally,
innocent days of joy, desire,
and infinite dreams to grow old.

Saints & Sages - Ashok Dullu

Lalla-Ded's Married Life & Liberation

A great deal of controversy exists as to precisely when Lalla was born. Some writers give the date of her birth as the middle of the fourteenth century while other sources indicate that Lalla could have been born somewhere between A.D 1317 and A.D 1320 (even as early as 1300-1301), and that she died in the 1370s or 1380s.

Lalla was given in marriage to Nicha Bat of Pampore at a young age. Her in-laws gave her a new name - Padmavati. The custom of naming a new bride when she is accepted into her husband's family still exists among Kashmiri Hindus. It symbolizes a married woman's new identity as a wife and daughter-in-law. However, in her verses, she always refers to herself by her maiden name Lalla and it is this name that has come down to posterity.

Maltreated in Marriage, Legends speak about her mother-in-law as a tyrant who filled her marital life with suffering. Both Lalla's family and that of her husband Nica Bhat belonged to different Śaiva Tantric sects that were at odds with each other. This was perhaps another source of tension for poor Lalla.

Lalla was not given enough to eat. Her mother-in-law would give her small servings, making them look larger by hiding a stone underneath the food on her plate. Lalla would quietly eat whatever she was served. Lalla plays along with the ruse, making the guests think Lalla is treated like a queen. She dutifully

washes the stone at the end of the meal, placing it back on its shelf each time.

A special *grahashanti* ceremony (a prayer for bringing peace into the house) was once held at her house. As she went out that day to fetch water from the river, one of her neighbors teased her that she would have a feast that night. Lalla's reply that has become a famous proverb in Kashmiri was:

'hund maritan kinah kath noshi nalvat tsalih nah zanh'

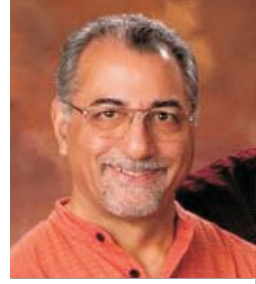
which means - whether a lamb or a sheep is killed at her house, the daughter-in-law will always get a stone.

Some legends describe that her marriage was not consummated, while others say she was a disobedient wife who preferred to keep to herself.

Her morning chores would invariably be her daily visit to the temple

where she performed her *sādhana*, or a riverside, or a well to fetch water sometimes alone or other times with other women. Sometimes she is followed & seen disappearing into white light. At other times, she is encountered in deep trance by the river.

One day, the mother-in-law finally succeeds in casting enough doubt into the mind of her son, that he decides to follow Lalla



as she goes about her morning chores. Suspecting her of infidelity, her husband followed her to the river bank where he found her sitting alone in a meditative posture. He went home and waited for her to come back. Soon Lalla returned with an earthen pitcher full of water on her head. Filled with rage, her husband hit the pitcher with a stick. While the pitcher broke into pieces, the water stayed miraculously intact on her head. Lalla calmly went inside the house and poured the water into smaller vessels until all vessels were full. She threw the leftover water outside the house where a pond is believed to have formed. Later on, this pond was named Laltrag (the Pond of Lalla), which remained full for many centuries.

The miracle of the water pitcher makes her very famous as does the springing of the pond .

This incident represents a turning point in Lalla's life . The fact that Lalla is able to nourish her household with that water without reacting or responding to the torrent of raging emotions from her in-laws, is symbolic proof that she has achieved a higher level of transformation. She is a realized soul who no longer requires to continue with the meaningless married life. So it is a culmination of the maltreatment meted out by the mother-in-law and the final act of breaking the pitcher of the ego, freeing the waters to flow where it wills which truly frees her from bondage of the ego, and not just the unfortunate marriage.

In this story, among the elements that seemed to spark such a response of awe and admiration were Lalla's dedication to daily spiritual discipline despite the demands of her family life; her ability to remain calm and accepting in the face of adversity; and the transformation of the heroine.

As Lalla rejects social conventions, she

is subject to ridicule, which causes a great deal of pain to her. At the same time it makes her focus even more intensely on her spiritual quest, now that she occupies a space outside the system. She says in a verse:

*'The chain of embarrassment will only break
When I can tolerate taunts and mocking words
Robe of self-pity will burn away
When the inner unbridled horse (restless mind) is
brought under control'*

So she begins the life of a wandering ascetic, who many times is depicted as naked or semi-nude.

This is a very controversial issue among authors who have written about Lalla. Many writers have difficulty trying to reconcile their awe and reverence for Lalla with the problematic image of a naked woman. That she took up this mode of life seems to be supported by one of her vaks:

*Gwaran von nam kunuy vatsun
Neybra dop nam anndaray atsun;
Suy gav Lali mey vaakh ta vatsun,
Tavay mey hyotum nangay natsun.*

My Guru gave me but one precept; "From without withdraw your gaze within, And fix it on the Inmost Self." I, Lalla, took to heart this one precept, And therefore naked I began to dance.

Lalla's wandering in a nude state could refer to her divesting or de-robing herself of all worldly attachments, including her family, friends, and the comfort of a home. Nakedness expresses vulnerability and humility, but it can also be inherently freeing, like that of a naked child at play, innocent of the shame or danger that adults experiences impose upon the state. It is not out of a desire to shock, nor in a mood of self-mortification. It is just in her "fine madness" she had become completely unselfconscious. She is then made out to have cast away her apparel to go about dancing in



the nude. Her craving for breaking the conventional bonds of societal mores by liberating herself was expressed early on in her life:

mandachi haa'nkal kar tshe'nyam
When can I break the bonds of shame ?
When I am indifferent to jibes and jeers.
When can I discard the robe of dignity ?
When desires cease to nag my mind.

Lalla meets Hamadani - The Baker story

This story has very interesting dimensions. The essence of the story where not much is contested is that her credentials as an evolved soul were fairly well established. The body of work – *Vakhs* attributed to her are ample proof of this fact. It is also accepted that when this incident happened, she was a wandering ascetic.

What is contested is ,her wandering as a poorly clad or naked ascetic ,her conversion to Islam, her spiritual ascendance with respect to her Muslim contemporaries.

The story begins with Lalla, who has taken to roaming poorly clad, claiming “there are no real men” here so why should I wear clothes? She would spend most of the time in her Sadhana away from the crowds .She was a practicing Yogini from the Kashmir Shaiva tradition. One day, she joins the people who have gathered to welcome this Sufi Saint from Hamadan .

The historical context of Hamadani's journey to Kashmir is briefly described here to put the events in context. The stern but generous ruler Timur back in Persia was in the habit of disguising himself and going out and giving to the poor, but a “greedy Sayyid neighbour” caught wind of one poor woman's fortune and stole it from her. After a long detailed drama, which is longer than the baker story, the conclusion of this drama results in Timur's announcement that all Sayyids must prove their purity by passing the ordeal of riding the hot iron horse. Only Mir Sayyid `Ali

Shah Hamadani, who was a sufi saint of the Kubarwiya order is said to have gone successfully through the ordeal .Timur's insistence that all of Ali Hamadani's followers too have to pass the test made their stay in Hamadan untenable. Timur is also said to have ordered Ali Hamadani to go to Kashmir. So you find him in Kashmir on the mission to spread Islam in Kashmir.

Hamadani saw from a distance a poorly clad woman but bright like lightning. The moment she saw him and the party, she ran shrieking “I've seen a man! I've seen a man!” and runs for cover. She first runs into the shop of the grocer or butcher, who yells at moving towards her and sends her back out. Then she runs across the street into the baker's and jumps in the oven. Baker faints out of fear of what the King would do to him. Then to his shock and relief he sees Lalla emerging in fine clothing and then hastening after Hamadani.

Lalla had purposely threw herself in the oven to show Hamadani that the ordeal he had endured at the hands of Timur was an easy job for persons of advanced occult powers. On seeing Lal Ded coming out of a furnace of fire attired in fine clothes , his pride of riding the fire horse was humbled, and he becomes a constant companion of hers. In this story Lalla is now a saint in her own right meeting another saint on the path.

This was the period when Islam was making inroads in Kashmir. Sultans had already established their kingdom. Islam was patronized by them. We find Lalla identified and revered by both Hindu and Muslim religious traditions, despite her Hindu heritage. Perhaps this is due to the temporal placement of her life. She lived at a time when the presence of Islam was growing in the valley, and the recognition of her by the Sufis was a natural inclination especially as she was in any case propagating oneness of God as against the highly ritualistic religious beliefs of the original settlers -Kashmiri Pandits.

Adopting the local saint, as a means to allay the fears and anxieties around the strange and new, seems rather ingenious. By incorporating her into the narratives of great saints, she becomes part of the greater narrative that develops around Islam in Kashmir. It also perhaps helped to keep the deeper roots of the cultural identity structure intact, connecting the past to the present.

It will be pertinent to note that Lalla's vaakhs were orally transmitted for over 300 years before her name was mentioned by Persian scholars in their works. The 20th & 21st narrators include Kashmiri Pandit Scholars, Kashmiri Muslim scholars, Britishers, Journalists, Internet bloggers and diaspora. The first scholarly accounts of Lalla, originating from British colonialists, Temple and Grierson in the early part of the twentieth century, provide some form of scholarly legitimacy to her existence and indicate her worthiness of further study.

Scholarly attention from Lalla's fellow Kashmiri Pandits also reclaims her as one of their own, reasserting her connections with the Kashmiri Śaiva tradition, and her identity as one.

Similarly, Lalla serves as a uniting force that transcends religious identity in favour of community identity, bringing Kashmiris together in their love of Lalla and her story.

There is no doubt that the history of Hamadani's seven hundred followers fleeing from Timur's edict and settling in Kashmir had a profound effect on the Kashmiri community, changing the very fabric of the society.

Sayyid Hamadi was a great proselytizer, but one wonders how in his book 'Zakhirat-ul-Muluk' to guide a Sultan in treating his non-Muslim subjects, he could bring in conditions which perhaps even Quran-sharif did not lay down on how to treat non-Muslims. He was no doubt a disciplined & trained Islamic proselytizer. He is regarded as the greatest influencer to bring Islam to

Kashmir.

Life is a story, and Lalla is just one of them – A shining connection to intermingling identities for Kashmiris and spiritual explorers. Her universal elements will continue to draw in the explorers of story and symbolism, while her unique Kashmiri qualities will shift and change with the times and the narrators.

[Acknowledgement: Locating Kashmir in Lal Ded : Communicating identity and meaning through narrative - Diane Fereig]

Note: This write up is meant to bring out some striking aspects of Lalla to fore for our community. It rests heavily on the material as indicated in Acknowledgement.

Author can be contacted at :
ashokdullu@gmail.co

My Medical Journey ... From Page 23

he said apologetically, "This was rather awkward for me. You are a good doctor and in touch with modern medicines. I am an old hand. You have overwhelmed me by your indulgence; by encouraging me to write the prescription."

"On the contrary, I am so pleased you did it. It will boost father's morale. I am sure it will cure him. Old remedies from old physicians sometimes work wonders," I said, bidding him farewell.

Father took one dose of Gopi Nath's mixture soon after. He ate a light dinner of rice and *dodie kaer*. He took another dose of the mixture before he went to bed and slept through the night.

Next morning, the visits to the lavatory stopped. Two days later father said he felt constipated!

Doctor can be contacted at:
kundanleela@yahoo.com

Short Story - Parineeta Khar

Radha, Rebecca & Raginia

It was the morning of *jyeshth ashtami*, the eighth day of the lunar fortnight. The city of Srinagar had woken to a late spring after a cold May. The breeze in the early morning was cool but not biting. Radhai, the matriarch of a pandit family was busy assorting the items with feverish energy going up and down the five storey house. The things required were for the aquatic journey as well as the puja; the annual ceremonial worship was to be offered to the Devi of Tullamulla.

The boatman was there having punctually arrived at 6 AM, sitting crouched at



Photo : Alamy

the stone steps leading to the ghat. The morning tea would be brewed in the kitchen part of the *Donga* (boat) which would sail them to Tullamulla, the abode of Goddess Raginia. No regular meal would be served till the puja was over. A large willow-basket full of knol-khol (khol-rabi), lotus stem was stocked in the boat. It would be cooked on their way.

Raginia was their *Ishtdevi* – the clan Goddess, who loved milk and sweets and abhorred meat. Radhai loved, revered and even held the deity in awe; her universe was incomplete without the Devi. If any family member of the house consumed meat or eggs the night before *ashtami*, it was mandatory to wash one's body, clothes and mind too off the

thoughts of meat to enter the abode of Devi. Radhai had avowed to pass on the legacy of *ashtami* on to her progeny.

Every year this day the family rented a *donga* to proceed to *Tullamulla* to worship the *Devi*. This ritual journey had to be taken to respond to the call (*naad*) of their beloved Raginia. Aunts, cousins and the whole retinue of relatives had already seated themselves comfortably in one of the chambers of the boat. In the atmosphere of joviality, something plagued the senior woman's heart. Her young daughter in law was in the ninth month of her second pregnancy, though she had the assurances of the mid wife (whom she had consulted), that the birth would take some time. With Devi's name on her lips, the boat man lowered his oars. Women bustled in the kitchen and men talked merrily, but Shyama the expecting mother was advised to sit silently in a corner, eat less and talk less so as to keep the excitement at bay, for excitement could induce labour.

They reached the holy precincts. Radhai quickly having finished her bath in the ladies section of the river, ordered the *Halwai* to prepare the sacred food of halwa and luchi. The puja done, a late lunch was served. So far so good, Radhai cast worried glances at her daughter in law, the day passed without any event. In the late night the older woman felt like spending some time close to the holy spring, considered to be the symbol of Devi. She sat with folded hands, her eyes fixed at the luminous effulgence of the divine visage; she felt the Devi was smiling at her with pleasure. In that short spell of time, she was conscious





that Shyama will have a daughter with features carved akin to the smiling idol. And her husband tugged at her phiran sleeve "Come, Shyama is in labour.....I had told you". He reprimanded with his masculine authority. Shyama's daughter was born in the blessed village of Devi's abode, all pink and features chiseled like the idol. They called her Raginia. The child was blessed by *Devi Raginia*. She was made to fast on every ashtami and observe the Tullamula pilgrimage with a special reverence. The little girl would help her mother and grandmother clean the kitchen of all the vestiges of meat, eggs and onions, and all the stains of previous cookings. When the kitchen was freshly washed with clay and water, when pots and pans were scrubbed to sparkle, then alone it was worthy of being used for ashtami prasad. Raginia grew up listening to Devi's stuti (praises). Radhai would sing the *Panchastavi* sitting amidst Shyama and her two children. The so called fast of ashtami would start with puffed up steaming hot sugared singhara purries, followed by a sumptuous vegetarian meal and a snack again for supper.

Raginia reached her teens. Now, with college educated reasoning, she would question the fasting on ashtami day. She found it ridiculous to call it fasting, when all a person did on ashtami was to eat. The simple

house holder that Radhai was had a simple explanation, may be devoid of intellectual details.

"Listen dear, this day Devi manifested herself in *Tullamula*. She appeared in Krishanjoo Kar's dream, instructed him to go to the confluence of Shadipur. A serpent led the way while an inverted cauldron of milk laid a trail to guide the righteous bhatta. The mulberry tree in the spring is the symbol of Devi. We celebrate Devi's coming to Kashmir desh by singing her praises and also eating savouries. Every bhatta holds this lore dearest to heart and also vrat and utsav (fasting and celebrations) go hand in hand".

"But no roganjosh" Raginia's brother joked. "Hush children" Radhai placed her old finger on his lips " never should you pollute your tongue by naming the thing on ashtami day. It is a sacrilege. Devi loves kheer and sweets. Anywhere any time your reverence should not dwindle and Devi will be benevolent.

Raginia married, marriage was a hasty affair. The wonder was that the girl born on the premises of Tullamula, met her future groom also in Tullamula. The boy who till then had been avoiding marriage, noticed Raginia when she was deep in prayer. Eyes closed and hands folded, she stood facing the sanctum. When she opened her eye lids loaded with the spiritual somnolence, her eyes met the smiling young man as if thrown from the heavens. He had been smitten; his whole bearing went through a sweet sensation. A spell had been cast by the divine mother. In mid seventies the boy could not approach the girl right there. He ran to his mother and insisted to search for the girl's family. His mother responded by fervently scrutinizing all the dharamsalas and located the girl. This marriage was accepted and honoured as Devi's will.

If Raginia's grandmother Radhai existed from ashtami to ashtami and breathed Devi's name with every breath, her new home was

equally if not more reverential to Tullamula. Her mother in law took the little pilgrimage to Tullamula without a fail, every month on the eighth day of lunar fortnight in the snowy grey winters and searing summers. She would come back to eagerly waiting children with sweet halwa of semolina and delicious nadermonja (lotus stem pakoda). The old grandmother in law of Raginia would ask with bright enthusiasm,

“And how was the darshan?” “Oh, the Devi was dancing with her consort”. And further she would report how beautiful the sacred water looked like nectar of *Devas*. (It is believed that the colour of the water of the holy spring changes according to the moods and whims of the Devi).



On ashtami day one has to start a meal with an aachaman, then leave little portion of rice and curries for birds, dogs and other beings. One had to share the food with all living beings.

As the hues of the spring conformed with the moods of Devi, when Raginia's son was born, the Tullamula spring seemed exceptionally blue to the adoring eyes of the two grandmothers. The visits to Tullamula continued for some more years. At the surface things looked usual yet a worrying buzz was in the air as if the demon Jalodbhav was moving underneath the placid waters of the Dal. The very breeze appeared whispering in the ears

of bhattas “you are not safe”. Devi is angry, the nectar has turned murky, the old bonyas (chinars) of Tullamula aangan looked despondent. Such were the disturbing reports of the pilgrims from *Tullamula*.

The Magh ashtami of 1990, the winds turned icy. Shyama still wanted to go on her monthly darshan of Devi, though she was warned “no going to Tullamula this month – a bomb may explode, terrorists may strike – anything can happen”. But go, she must. Devi would be waiting for her devotees. They had to respond to the call. That visit proved to be Shyama's last. She was met with a forlorn Devi. The sanctum wore a deserted look. The pundit was in a hurry to wind up. The flowers and vyen (the scented herb) were not available. She bent down to offer the customary milk, her fingers lost the grip on the tumbler; the water of the spring was reddish black. Crest fallen she reached home. Radhai's habitual query about the darshan was replied with tears in eyes.

“The spring is actually reddish black”. “Oh! The kalpanth is inevitable now, doom is here”.

The old woman beat her breast and wailed.

“The Devi, our mighty protector has abandoned us, the sinners that we be”. Now onwards the old lady would keep on mumbling “oh Devi ,take me to your abode”.

The alert, agile woman suddenly bent with her years. Meanwhile pundits were on run, the way deer run helter skelter when predators are on the prowl. Bhattas left, compelled by impending warnings and threats to their faith and honour. Radhai not even once stopped praying to her Ishtdevi. “Let me die here, in my own sati desh”. This prayer at least did not go unheard. She died in her sleep leaving Shyama and her husband free to move out.

When hordes of pundits ran to nearby Jammu, some little farther to Delhi or Jaipur,

Raginia's family's destination was continents across. Her elder brother was successful in getting their immigration to Canada, where he stayed. They had the citizenship and he was insisting that her son will have a better future and her husband could use his degrees to his advantage. But they debated, how could they leave Kashmir, Raginia's Tullamula?. They delayed the departure, though 10 year old Shubhum's education was in doldrums and even his life was not safe. But then her husband was ready to leave following an incident of a grave nature – In the August of 1990 one afternoon the boy came with a long face from the cricket field. He had been jeered at by his Muslim friends “Shubham bhatta, why don't you go the way other bhattas have gone”. They did not want to bring their child up among threats, murder and indignity. They succumbed to these unseen forces.

Raginia's husband was ready to leave, she still lingered. Then one night she had a vision or perhaps a dream. She was sitting in a trance in the precincts of Tullamula when Radhai touched her shoulder and said vividly “go Raginia go, Devi hates tamas (violence). Eons ago she had requested Hanumanji to carry her out of Lanka to satidesh. But now Ravana is ruling this unfortunate land. Now go”. The vision faded. They left lock stalk and barrel. Initially they had to accommodate themselves with her brother's family, later things fell in place.



Everything changed here, their language, attire, friends and life over all. Yet the transition was rapid, in two years they drove on the highways of Canada with dexterity and stood up to every demand of day to day life. What did not change was the devotion to Devi, they observed ashtami fast with the same élan. The culture might have gone through erosion but the adherence to Tullamula was firm.

While the old people lost the familiarity and security of home, middle aged got busy in establishing and anchoring themselves in the new land. The third generation like Shubham, being raw in physical and mental makeup moulded themselves in the attained shapes given by the adopted land. As a person Shubham was honest but impersonal in ways. His practicality sometimes took the dimensions of ruthlessness. Raginia took a degree in hospitality. During her course she met a fellow Panjabi woman and in course of time started a small business in partnership with this Panjabi friend. The weekends saw her busy in her food joint serving roganjosh, kalia etc. to hoards of customers. Life was good, actually better than back home. The financial position improved but a thorn of separation always pricked, more so at the heart of Raginia's mother-in-law. This older woman was left alone among the four walls of a prosperous home with gadgets beeping all the time. Some kind of emptiness surrounded this lonely woman. Then they decided to anoint the Tullamula Devi in their own expansive land. They constructed a marble temple and on a jesht ashtami day consecrated a beautiful idol of Tullamula Devi. The temple was surrounded by a water canal which was pumped by an electric motor. They even sowed the saplings of maple and now the Tullamula was all in form. They were aware every inch that their creation was an imitation but all the same it reminded them of the original shrine. Now the old woman spent most

of her days ruminating in her own *Tullamula*.

A handsome youth in his early twenties, Shubham, was fair with a crown of brown hair and eyes also brown with an aquiline nose. He mingled well with the crowds. He did very well academically with a degree in internal medicine. His general bearing was more Canadian, which was expected. However, his friendship with a girl of Jewish origin sent the family in bouts of panic. To his mother he had told “this is my girl”. They had been together in medical school, had clicked from day one and at the end of the term were quite intimate. When he brought her home, Raginia's mother-in-law was not comfortable.

“This is Rebecca, call her Becky, the special girl for you, mom”, looking with smiling eyes at his mother. Raginia found her rather coy and surprisingly a picture of sobriety. Even the girls back home were contrastingly blatant now. She was invited to join them for a meal. Raginia's husband proudly offered her some mutton, she hastily waved a hand “please, no red meat, the only red meat I eat is a beef steak.” When Raginia translated the declaration to the older woman, she sprang up from her seat.

“Thrahi thrahi, why! Shubham you had to choose this cow eating woman of all the girls in the world - yuck, so repulsive”. Shubham gestured not to make faces, that was out of etiquette. He later explained to Rebecca that beef was prohibited for a pandit and they abhorred even the name. However, her next visit was more disastrous. Out of a genuine curiosity she stepped inside the little *Tullamula* and was accosted by the grandmother by a loud yell.

“Oh bewakoof ladki (stupid girl), don't set your foot inside the temple, you eat cows”. The Jewish girl was lambasted by the pandit grandmother of her friend with whom she was in a serious relationship.

This family had gone through hardships and banishment from homeland but never

had they known a discord within the family. As the visits of the girl increased the heated arguments between the young man and the parents also raised. One night with a heavy heart Raginia sat facing the Goddess and prayed for a solution. She muttered under her breath “Ya Devi Sarva Bhuteshu, Budhi Rupen Samasthita, Namastase ... (oh Goddess you reside in all beings even as the incarnation of wisdom, give me the wisdom to find a path, I bow before you)”. Her mother in law joined the prayer and said in stifled tones.

“We left home and everything connected to home behind us. The transformation was natural. With Devi's compassionate benevolence we are here safe and thriving. But we lost the simplicity of existence, chastity of thoughts and purity of heart. You Raginia were born so near to Raginia Devi, you have to be the beacon of the refined bhatta civilization. Keep your senses alert”.

“Amma” Raginia replied in all humility, “we may wash the temple clean of her steps, she has already occupied the threshold of your household. She lives in Shubham's heart and he is the part of our biological frame. Let us wait and watch”.

Then followed another event of a more serious nature, One Sunday morning Rebecca appeared in a fine brocade sari, her head covered and hands folded and stood near Raginia “Raginia, I have given up beef and stopped eating flesh altogether. I will observe all the rituals of ashtami – make me a part of your family”. Right behind her stood Shubham looking straight into his mother's eyes. Raginia was dumb founded and lowered her head. The older lady was thoroughly scandalized looking at the girl coming with her own alliance.

“Rebecca, you are a wonderful girl and a conscientious child. We as a community obstinately cling to our roots”. She waited for the girl's reaction.

“Raginia, do not talk about roots, every fresh sapling grows its roots afresh”. This was

an intelligent explanation.

“Look Rebecca” Raginia continued “language, religion and race, everything is against this union. My mother in law has to resort to pantomime techniques to communicate with you”.

Shubham gently touched his mother's shoulder and asked in his youthful voice “why mom, yesterday I heard you recite ekam sat viprah – bahundah vinduti (truth is one but wise men call it in many ways), "maa , leave aside this insipid talk of religion and culture, I do not care and will not carry this unpleasant burden”. “No Shubham, not a burden, call this your legacy. Do not see the things with your lens”.

“And you want to see everything through your lens” Shubham retorted back, thus ended the undecided interview.

Shubham shifted to the dorm in his hospital and saw his family only on weekends. Life continued with pace but the discontent at home was pulsating. Raginia was in touch with Rebecca. She would call her and during one of her talks she asked the Canadian girl the cause of her resilience in following her son.

“Only one cause – the ties of the family which tie your family in a string. My parents treat my marriage as my personal affair. In Shubham's case he even waits for his grandmother's consent for our marriage”. Raginia was touched and left the decision to Devi and the Devi was at work.

The yearly food festival of Raginia's food joint was at hand. First three days of the week they served the ethnic Panjabi food, rest of the week was stipulated for Kashmiri food. Roganjosh and kalia were the highlights of the weekend. An overwhelming crowd thronged the food joint. Business was going good, money poured. On Sunday when they were expecting a deluge of guests, happened to be the ashtami “ Raginia's day of fasting and vegetarianism. She herself had to preside and



direct the proceedings in the kitchen. She covered her nose to evade the strong aroma of mutton dishes. In this hustle one of the Mexican assistants came with the salt box. “Stop!” Raginia shouted “ I have already added the salt”. “ No madam – I am sure we did not.....why don't you taste it?” the Mexican suggested simply.

“No” Raginia screamed “Oh no, I can't ...I am....” Then she stopped. How could this helper understand her peculiar predicament? It was already 10 O'clock in the morning. The taste of this dish is special and subtle. Her Panjabi friend insisted “Raginia, taste it yourself, this is our signature item. Quality of the taste cannot be compromised”. Raginia dipped the spoon into the bubbling vessel , brought out a chunk and little bit of gravy, demurred and then put the thing in her mouth. “Oh my God, this is awful there is no salt”. The mistake was rectified and the dish was saved and so was the day. Everything went on well but she was miserable. She held her tears in eyes, rushed home and locked herself in her room. The embankment of retrain was washed away by the tears of repentance. “ I have committed a sacrilege. What would Radhai say?

Amidst this misery- something flashed in her brain. Automatically her fingers pressed Rebecca's number. She knew that latter was in emergency room duty.

“Rebecca.... This is an emergency”. The girl felt the agitation in Raginia's voice. “I have swallowed something I have got to get my innards washed”.

“Can you drive or should I come” asked Rebecca. “I can”.

While driving, she visualized the yogis who could rinse their intestines clean and put them back again. Radhai had claimed to have witnessed a spiritual figure do it. Rebecca made a case of accidental poisoning and Raginia got a stomach wash. Back in a recuperating room, her mother in law joined her.

“You are pale as a shava (corpse), what happened?”. “I ate meat on ashtami.” Raginia replied sobbing.

“Accidentally inadvertently”? Old lady could not believe her Raginia could commit the blasphemy. “No – very consciously to keep my profits unharmed. Business got the priority. The door of the room opened, Rebecca came near her and gently bared her arm. “I have to give you a shot, Raginia. The patient silently gave her arm, and with maternal pride looked at the white girl, so kind, so pure and sweet.

“Thank you Rebecca – mind you we do not call our mothers in law by first name”. The girl hugged her.

“You did not swallow any poison, right? Rebecca looked straight into her eyes and asked.

Raginia bent her head. “You swallowed meat on ashtami, right?...I understand”.

“I am sure you do”. Raginia answered, then addressing her mother in law in native tongue “good, bad, superior and inferior are but human understandings. Devi staged a drama and we have accepted Rebecca. This was Devi's plan and play, her leela.

Contact author at :
a_khar@yahoo.com

کॉशिर्य तल्मीह

खजु सुंद दस्तरखान

खज्जा अख ओस लोडडुत अँदरी अँदरी सफेद पोश गछ्नि, मगर नेबुर्य टँठ ओस यिथु तिथु बहाल थँविथ। अकि दूह आव अँमिस अख लॉज़िमदर पोछ। नोकरन येलि शामस बतु ब्रॉठकुन वातुनोव, खज्जन वोनुस किमामु सान, ‘मुजि वूटा, दस्तरखान क्याज़ि ओनुथ नु?’ नोकरन वोनुस बुमु त्रकरॉविथ, ‘सु हज़ छु खज्जि बायि व्वडि द्युतुमुत।’ यि बूज़िथ गव खज्जु स्यठाह खँजिल।

कॉसि हुंज़ अपुज़ टँठ फुटनु विज़ि छु खज्जु सुंद दस्तरखान याद प्यवान।

कॉशिर्य तल्मीह
खुब सुंद दस्तरखान

खुबाह अके ओस लोडडुत अँदरी अँदरी सफेद पोश गवहेने -

मगर नेबुर्य तिथु ओस तिथु तिथु बेहाल तिथु तिथु - अके दूह ओ

अँस अके लॉज़िमदर पोछ - लोकरन येलि शामस बतु ब्रॉठकुन

वातुनोव, खज्जु सुंद दस्तरखान क्याज़ि ओनुथ नु?

नोकरन वोनुस बुमु त्रकरॉविथ, ‘सु हज़ छु खज्जि बायि व्वडि द्युतुमुत।’ यि बूज़िथ गव

खज्जु स्यठाह खँजिल।

कॉसि हुंज़ अपुज़ टँठ फुटनु विज़ि छु खज्जु सुंद दस्तरखान याद प्यवान।

Profile

Our Shining Stars - M.K.Raina

Archana Kamath Hedgekar
The Surprise Kashmiri Singer

Archana Kamath Hedgekar is of Konkani origin with roots in Mangalore. So why are we including her in our series on **Our Shining Stars**, basically meant for Kashmiris? We have the reason, and a genuine reason. She is attracted to Kashmiri music and the Kashmiri songs since a long, and has been singing Kashmiri Bhajans and songs with utter devotion. If you listen to her with your eyes shut, you will never know she is not Kashmiri. Over the years, she has almost perfected her pronunciation of Kashmiri vocabulary and is working hard to get it smooth and appealing.

But Archana definitely has Kashmiri roots too. "Being a Gaud Saraswat Brahmin" Archana says, "my roots lie in Kashmir only and I am proud to be a Gaud Saraswat Brahmin. I wish to explore and popularise Kashmiri music and culture through more and more songs." Archana is a regular invitee to the social get-together programmes of Kashmiri Pandits in Mumbai. She not only attends the programmes but also sings to the delight of audience. Archana lives in Mumbai



and Mumbai Kashmiri community loves her so much. Dr Sanjay Dhar, President of the Kashmiri Pandits' Association has this to say about the singer: "Archana surprised us all with her beautiful rendition of Kashmiri folk songs. A regular now in Kashmiri Pandits Cultural functions, her beautiful voice, excellent flow and almost perfect Kashmiri pronunciation is a great music to ears. Being a Saraswat herself, her ease at Kashmiri music probably reveals her long last connection with the Kashmiri Pandit community. I am sure her skills and great voice will take her to great heights. Kashmiri Pandits of Mumbai will continue to love her and her beautiful voice, and seek her presence in all our activities." Shri S.P.Kachru, former President of the Kashmiri Pandits' Association adds: "A Konkani Saraswat Brahmin by descent, Ms





Archana Kamath Hegdekar introduces a refreshing whiff of reclaiming Kashmiri language especially amongst Kashmiri youth. Few can embody the various interpretations of Kashmiri lyrics and music as good as her. Archana's penchant for straddling the twin world of music and Kashmiri language is at once the torch bearer and the role model for inspiring the preservation and propagation of our beloved language. And in that respect, may her relevant initiatives come to fruition.”

Archana hails from a musical family, so music came quite naturally to her. She got her first music lessons from her grandfather Late Mr. Narasimha Kamath at the age of 3. Her father Mr. Dinesh Kamath has also been her mentor all through the years. Though no one



from her family has got formal training in music, her parents made sure she gets to learn Indian classical music formally under a trained teacher. Archana owes all her achievements to her parents and to her family for their immense support in her musical journey.

Archana's formal education in Hindustani Classical music began at the age of 8, under the guidance of Mrs. Shruti Gokhale, Mrs. Swaroopa Gadgil, Mrs. Vidula Bhagwat and renowned vocalist Padmashree



Padmaja Phenany Joglekar. She is currently learning from renowned vocalist Smt. Shampa Pakrashi. One of her biggest achievements till date is singing in the presence of the Songstress Lata Mangeshkar ji, at an award function in Shanmukhananda Auditorium, Sion, Mumbai.

Archana sang chorus in the 2018 movie 'Raazi' for 'Ae Watan' song. She sang a Konkani song for the famous rapper 'Divine' /



Gully Boy's documentary (2019), produced by Red Bull India. She did playback for the actress Kangana Ranaut in AIB video and has been a part of seven songs in the recent theatre musical 'Chhota Bheem Jaadoo Adventure'. Presently, she teaches music in Shankar Mahadevan Academy since five and a half years.

Archana's Kashmiri song 'Harmukh Bartal' went viral recently and recorded more than a lakh of views in just 24 hours. In a story done on her, The Indian Express dated 23 October 2018 says, "A Konkani-origin singer has become a household name in Kashmir with her covers sung in Koshur." Dipti Nagpaul D'souza in her story on the singer writes, "In April 2017, Mumbai-based Archana Kamath Hegdekar visited Kashmir for the first time. She had heard about its extraordinary beauty but had not expected the kind of hospitality she and her family experienced. "The people were generous. They were very courteous and placed immense importance on the guest's comfort and safety. I came to Mumbai touched", says Archana. "Archana became a viral sensation among Kashmiri locals after her first song in Koshur garnered over three

lac views. Hegdekar has since been recording covers of several traditional Kashmiri songs even though she does not understand the language" records The Indian Express.

"I am a Saraswat Brahmin and I read online that Kashmiri Pandits also share the same roots. We were all Brahmins settled by the banks of river Saraswati until we migrated. That for me, strengthened the bond I share with Kashmiri Pandits" says Archana.

Archana is presently working on a Kashmiri-Hindi bi-lingual track which she will write, compose and sing. "It is like a love song to Kashmir from the rest of India. In future, I want to contemporise old Kashmiri classics for the newer generation. One of the compliments I receive from Kashmiris is that they feel I am taking their culture mainstream, popularising it. Now I want to make that my aim" Dipti quotes her saying.

For perfection in singing Kashmiri songs, Archana still needs to correct her Kashmiri pronunciation for many peculiar words. Rita Kaul, a veteran Indian Classical and Folk music performer and a renowned music teacher of Mumbai says, "Archana, though not being Kashmiri but in spite of that her rendering is too good. I really appreciate her Kashmiri singing. It is wonderful but she needs to work more on 'talafus'. I can say she is still fantastic." Another prominent Kashmiri vocalist and cultural activist, known for his





songs sung in Gul-Gulshan-Gulfam and Saye-Deodar Ke for Doordarshan, Dilip Langoo, is all praise for Archana. Says he, “Such an intense dedication and love towards Kashmiri musicals is something we say result of past lives, I mean Poorvajanma. I heartily wish her best for her future endeavors. She has to work on pronunciation for sure, then more



sweetness will be added to the songs she sings. For past so many years, we have often listened to her YouTube postings and hail her efforts. She is too good. May Saraswati bless her. Aahee!”

Archana Kamath Hegdekar has also participated in the television shows on Doordarshan National. She was among the five finalists on ‘Khelo Gao Jeeto’ with Sachin Pilgaonkar in 2007. She participated in ‘Music Masti Dhoom’ with Anu Kapoor and Minal Jain in the year 2007 and in ‘Airtel Desh ki Awaz with Ghazal Maestro Talat Aziz in 2008. Archana was among the 7 finalists of a singing competition organized by Times of India at Andheri Sports Complex with Sonu Nigam as the Chief guest in the year 2007. She was one of the 8 finalists in ‘Voice of Mumbai’ competition organized by Hindustan Times, which was judged by Jatin-Lalit, Shaan and Sona Mohapatra, held in Andheri Sports Complex in 2008.

Singer can be contacted at :
kamatharchu@gmail.com



Short Story - M.K.Raina
The Last Game

Their's was called the 'Gang of Six'. Eldest among them was Lalji and he was 14 years old. All of them lived close to one another in the densely populated locality of Maniyar.



The name was not given to them for nothing. It was coined by Sama Kakh, a retired police officer of the locality, after giving due consideration to the boys' life style and activities. The six, Sama Kakh said, had, as per his knowledge, broken all records of being in one another's close company for such a long time. Frankly speaking, the boys were seen together right from the day they were enrolled in a near-by primary school, eight years back. Their meeting point was the shadowy space under a big Mulberry tree, in the middle of their mohalla, which they had cleaned and converted into a nice sitting place. They were there, except during rains & snow, every evening, doing their home work, discussing the issues they thought were important to them, planning their picnic trips and eating **Shahtul** (a large reddish-black, acidic and



deliciously flavoured fruit), by climbing up the tree, one branch reserved for each boy. And they had the exclusive right to the fruit by virtue of having engraved their names with a knife, on the trunk of the tree. During heavy snow fall in winter, they would invariably mould a Snowman by rolling snow, placing it vertically up at a fixed spot, resting it against the tree, and shaping it well like a fat man's torso. They would then place on it, a spherical head made up of snow again and also attach the limbs. It was the duty of Ramji, the youngest among them, to engrave and mark with soft charcoal, the Snowman's ears, eyes, nose and mouth. An old Kangri (Kashmiri Fire-pot) was also placed near by, to give a colourful touch to the artefact. And this Snowman was there to represent the 'Gang' till early spring when it would melt and vanish.



All this was till Lalji got a transistor radio as gift from his Delhi based cousin, with the added information that India-England Cricket Series was about to commence in England and they could hear the running commentary live on it. This changed their schedules altogether.

It was not that they had not seen or listened to a radio earlier. In fact, two of them have had radio sets in their homes, but they were of no use to them. Their parents would switch on the radios only for the news, being least interested in the games. Now, this transistor set gave them the immense pleasure of listening to what they wanted, at their own will.

Lalji was now busy, collecting information about the cricket matches to be played at various places in various countries. He got a new notebook and kept each and every information handy. Before the India-England Series got underway, Lalji had maintained record of all matches to be played over a period of one year. He would now occasionally be seen absent from the 'Gang'. Others were least worried, knowing fully that he was on the 'job'.

None of the boys had ever played cricket, or even watched a match before. But they had heard about it from their senior schoolmates. Lalji's cousin had informed them that the game was so tough that even the big powers like America, Soviet Union and Japan were scared of indulging in this deadly game. This however did not diminish the boys' interest in cricket. They waited anxiously

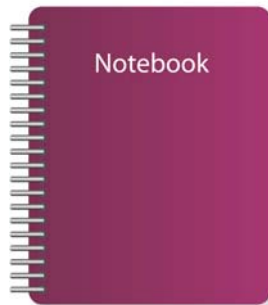


for the first match between the two countries, commentary of which really came live on the little transistor radio during late evening hours. There was some confusion initially, in understanding the words and phrases used by commentators which they overcame at the end of the first match spanning 5 days of play. All through the match, they were seen sitting beneath the Mulberry tree till midnight when under tremendous pressure from their elders, they had to disperse to their homes to have dinner and sleep.

This new development gave Lalji an added responsibility. Being senior, it was his duty to know more about the game. So, every day he would put lot of questions to his seniors and teachers and share the information with his mates. He would also give his comments, to impress others that he was picking up the game fast. After conclusion of the first match, the boys had known a lot about the game, or at least they thought so.

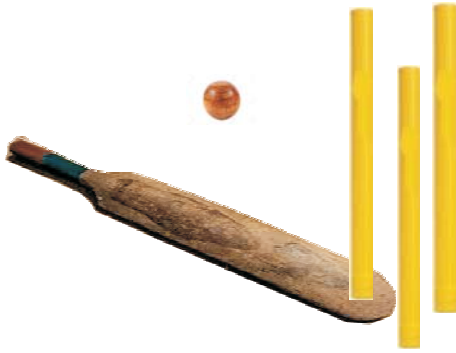
By end of the test series of five matches, Lalji and his team had a fairly good knowledge of the game. They were now aware of most of the rules. At times, they would also analyse the comments of a commentator and pronounce their judgement. And in the heart of hearts, they thought they were perfect players as well. "We are ready to prove our mettle, only if a team from other locality was ready to play with us", Lalji announced. Others cheered.

They needed eleven people to form a team and they were only six. But this did not pose any problem. The barbed wire fenced plot of land, half a mile away from their home, which was recently purchased by one of their neighbours to construct his new house, was too



small to accommodate eleven persons to field. Moreover, they thought they could always invite a couple of boys from the gathering to field for them on a bigger ground, if need be. And to bat, they decided that during a match with a rival team, five of them would bat twice.

So, on an auspicious day, the boys finally announced launch of their cricket team. They arranged four stumps, three for the



batting end and one for the runners end, in the shape of small lengths of mulberry branches. A new bat was available in the market at rupees ten which they could not afford. After pooling all their pocket money and the additional grant, which one of them received from his parents, they were able to make four rupees. Lalji, who was the natural choice for the



captainship because of his age, volunteered to get a selected piece of willow firewood from his home. This piece of wood was given to a carpenter, who got it beautifully transformed into a bat. Knowing that they had no more than four rupees on their body, the carpenter charged them only that amount and also gifted them a wooden ball. Boys were all thrilled. Now they thought, they were in a position to challenge any team. But Lalji's views were different. He thought it was wise to practice for at least a couple of days, before they challenge any body.

Next Sunday, they went to the 'play ground' fully equipped and took along a dozen of children much less than their age to watch them play and clap. They decided the batting order by drawing lots. Lalji was overwhelmed with joy as he was to bat first, and Kundan, the last man to bat, was to bowl first. Lalji gave



some useful instructions to Kundan. 'How to bowl a fast ball and how to deliver a spin?' Kundan nodded his head, confirming his grasp of the things. Lalji took charge as opener and looked around in a manner of a great batsman looking out for weakly defended territories. He was set to receive the first ball but wanted to receive a trial one first to gain confidence. He took the stance and signaled Kundan to bowl. Kundan delivered a fast ball, which took some time to reach Lalji.

Lalji hit the ball forcefully. But it was dead before it could reach back to the bowler. Children clapped.

Now was the time to deliver first 'official' ball of the hour. Kundan came running from quite some distance and threw the ball. Lalji took a step forward to make it bigger this time, and in a flash, he was clean bowled, the middle stump thrown two yards away licking dust. Lalji's bat was still in the air. Children behind him clapped again as Lalji stood motionless with his cheeks red.

It was the turn of Raghu now. He was two years younger to Lalji but had robust health and wide chest. Kundan was spinning the ball in his hands. Having sent the first ball

very 'fast', he made up his mind to send a 'spin' this time. As soon as he delivered the ball, which was anything but spin, Raghu moved to his left and hit the ball high in the air, and through a large glass window right into the attic of a bungalow at the boundary. Glass panes came crashing down. Raghu was terror-stricken.

A baldy, his eyes red with anger, peeped out of the window and yelled. Before the boys could assess the situation, a servant came running from the bungalow and caught Raghu by neck. Soon after came the baldy with the wooden ball, his white shirt miserably splashed with tea. He slapped Raghu hard on his face. Raghu fell on the ground. Baldy was mad. He continued to thrash Raghu with his fist and foot. Lalji, as leader of the team, intervened and pleaded for mercy, only to get a hard slap from the servant. This provoked Kundan. He came running from his position and caught servant's raised hand, and in a moment, Kundan was thrown



away by the baldy with a kick. Children sitting at the fence were now crying and weeping and abusing the baldy and his servant. The baldy 'captured' Raghu and Lalji and would not leave them unless they pay for two glass panes, a china

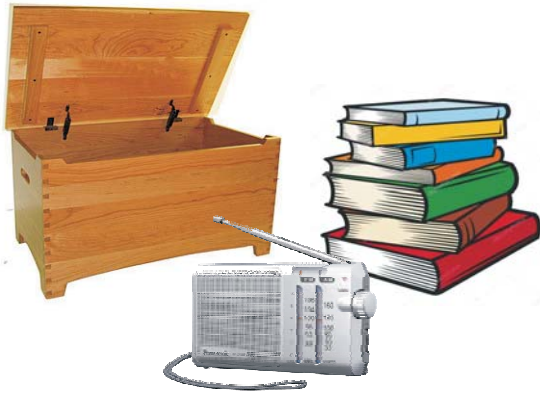


clay cup and laundry charges for the shirt. All this amounted to rupees eight. Boys did not have a penny and the baldy would not let them go. All the boys were weeping and wailing. A passer-by intervened. He pleaded with the baldy to lower his costs. Baldy, taking a lenient view, offered a two-rupee discount on the cost of damages, but the boys had nothing. The passer-by mediated a deal. Boys were asked to part with their bat and the ball, which according to their own confession, was valued at rupees four. Making sure that they had no money to pay the balance, and seeing them in tears, the baldy

was further moved. He let them go with the promise that they would pay the balance next morning.

The baldy was gone and so were his servant and the passer-by. The boys started towards their home in a perfect line, Lalji at their head and the children at the tail. All of them had their heads down. Lalji, Raghu and Kundan were still rubbing their body parts to eliminate pain. There was no weight to be carried back home. Stumps were not removed from the ground. They were kept standing there as a token of the Gang's entry into the game of cricket. They decided, and also persuaded children, not to reveal this episode to anybody in their mohalla.

The boys' dreams were shattered and next day, they took an oath not to play cricket again. Lest the running commentary tempt them to play again, Lalji wrapped up his transistor radio with a piece of cloth and placed it under the heap of old books in a large wooden box in his home. And for a full year, no one from the Gang took the route alongside that bungalow, lest the baldy spots them and demands two rupees. This, in spite of the fact that they had to traverse a long distance around to reach their



school everyday.

As far the boys' permanent spot under the tree, it remained an abandoned place thereafter, as the boys were scared to think of



being sighted and 'arrested' by the baldy. Came winter and with that a heavy snowfall. But there was no snowman under the tree this time. Everything around was frozen. The branches of the tree were hanging low, drops of water trickling down their leaves, perhaps mourning the disintegration of the 'Gang'.

Contact author at:
rainamk1@yahoo.co.in





امین کامیل

سلسلہ وار کتھ

سوال چھ کلک

Episode

1

Page 1

Stories from National Book Trust's 'azgi kashur' Edition 2008, Edited by Dr. R.L. Shant

تگر وونم ہنا ژ کھ سان ہیو: ژنے ترنے نے بیکہ کتھ فکر۔ ایم چھ
 قوتونی نوقطہ، یہ بڑا نازک مسلہ ہے۔ یہ چھنے ”دوتھ دیدی تہ شیر بچہ۔“
 اُمی زول سگریٹ۔ پان یٹھ کن تر اوتھ پھکروون تالوس کن اکھ
 گون دجو لومبکھ، یس ہنہ ہنہ تینو، پھہلیو تہ ساری سے کرس او چھکرنہ۔ تہ
 اُخرس، پنہ وجو دج بدوے پتھ کن تر اوتھ، میول وادس ستر واد۔
 نے اُس ژھو پ لچھ، اما پوز سوچان او سس کیتھ منوش کینا ز چھ اُسہ
 کن دہ پھکری پھکری اُندی پکھس بدمشک بناوان۔ پانہ خبر کینا کینا سوکھ
 یوگان، مگر بیٹن پھز بکھ تہ تم پتر اوتھ لسن بسن مشکل بناوان۔ یہ او سس
 بیٹن غوطن ز اُمی وون پیہ: ”بوز، کتھ چھنے بچ۔ یہ دھڑ کی بات نہیں۔ یہ چھ
 کلک ماملہ۔ میںے کینا چھم تسن سلس تہ مازس کرن۔ میںے چھ مسلہ ز
 لاشے کلہ اوس تہ کور کن اوس۔“ تگر وون زور دتھ: ”یہ اصل مسلہ ہے۔“
 میںے کرفلرا ز لیے تہ کینا انسان کلہ تہ کاڈ رؤس۔ یس ہر ہر چھ اُتھر

Continued on Page 53

کلہ کھاسر۔ مینے پھٹڑاؤ پَنڑی ژھوپہ تہ پان سومبر اوتھ پُژٹھس نکو : ”اہن
حض توہہ چھنا خبر اوس کورگن کلہ؟“

”ہم کو سب معلوم ہے“ تکر وون دند چیرتھ ہیو۔ ”تمن چھ خبر اوس
کروگر بڑگنالا تہ نمو پَن باز زپتھ۔ مگر ہم نے کچی گولیاں نہیں کھائی ہیں۔ یہ
گوس تھہ کیٹھ پزون ماکن۔ یہ مٹھس نہ راتھ دراس کالجہ تہ از بنیوس اور یور ہار
وار پلناوتھ تھاندار۔ تہ گیم وونی ترہ وری پلسہ بتہ کھوان۔ مینے نشہ نہ ووٹہ۔“

یہ کتھ پٹھ مے۔ انسان ہیکہ نہ اُکس ماکنس نشہ ووٹھ کڈتھ، اِد
یس دون ماکنن منز ہنہ بیہ، تمس چھ پانس لو تہ پانٹھو کزیا کرپج تہ لحد ہنز
صورتھ تھادنی کُرتھ۔ ماکن گو مانکن۔ تھہ انگس چیرتھ گو تھہ ووٹھ نہ تھو دکوتاہ
تہ تچھو توس۔ تی گو اتھ لاشہ یوسہ دون ماکنن اندر ہنہ اُس آہو۔

نہ اُس پٹھو پٹھو کتھ کنن گاہو، اما پوز پور اہم نہ کینہہ تہ۔ اِد
کنڑ اوسس محض پنہ زانی خاطر قصک ژوک زائن یرشہان۔ تہ یہ کانہہ
فابلی اوسس نہ زنیائے بوزتھ دمہا تھہ ژھن۔ تو پتہ یو دتہ خیال آہم
دون ماکنن منز پتھ کھمہ ہاسے پر۔ جنن ہیکہ کانہہ کو چنہ پٹھہ پتھہ۔ کتھ
واور دنیا وناونہ خاطر پُژٹھس مینے بیہ : ”توہہ آسہ پتہ پان خبر کُج ہو، نتہ کتہ
تکہ ہے خام پوریک تھاندار توہہ نشہ ووٹھ۔“

نہ باسینو اُس گو پھر۔ تکلیز گردن گیس ہناج، وٹھن پھولس
اُن تہ اچھن پھیرس شیطانی چک ہش مگر اُتھو ستی آیس بُمہ چارنہ۔“ یہ

Continued on Page 54



چھ سارے اُمس عمہ کنسٹپلہ سٹز غلطی۔ خبر زانیہ ہنہ؟ اُمی پڑھم۔ ”اہن حض
کیا زنیہ۔“ میے وؤنس زانیہ کرنہ روستے۔

”اُمی احمقن رُکوو سہ نفر“ یہ لوگ ونبہ: ”میے کرن نہ اندر کن خبر۔
نتہ لگہ میے دؤدھ کا دؤدھ اور پانی کا پانی سارے خبر۔ تویتہ بیہ میے پنڈو کا کاند
دُرس کرتھ۔“

”اہن حض سہ اوس گس نفر؟“ مے پڑھس کتھ ہنا واش کڈناونکہ غرضہ۔
”تہ چھمہ خبر، عمہ کنسٹپلن کلہ۔“ اُمس کھوت جکھ ہیو، گوڈ چھکھ
نہ پچھتھ تہ بنان تہ گوہان چھم سپاہ بُرتی۔ یمن چھا کاڈر۔ یہ معالے کی
نراکت نہیں سمجھتے ہیں۔ سہ گوہتھ چھم ونان، یہ حض اوس گس تام گری سوار۔
دپان پوشہ مرگہ بونہ تل چھ لاش ہیہو۔ وِس جواب۔ ہیو خرا، تم نے اُس
آدی کو چھوڑا کیسے۔ سہ اوس گس، کیتک۔ تم زَن آپسے قتل کورمت۔ کیوں؟
ہو سکتا ہے! تھاندارس چھ آسان دہن کتھن سٹن۔ کرنہ نہ؟“

”توت تام حض چھ پؤزے۔ پیہ تہ کرتھ توہہ ہیو اگرنگر مشہور
تھاندار۔ وونی کیاہ اتھ چھا کاہہ ٹھوٹھ یوان۔“

”ٹھوٹھ؟“ تم موراو راتہ موئل چالہ اچھ، کھوور اتھ تھاون پلسہ ٹوپی
پتھر تہ کارتلتھ وونم: ”ٹھوٹھ شوٹھ کوئی نہیں ہے۔ اُسہ چھ پوہ واریاہ کھیلہ
گنڑہ۔ سانی کا کاند چھنہ رُج۔ خام پورچ تھاندار ایل ژانس اوری۔ کاغذ بول
اٹھیں گے۔“

To be continued

Episode

1

Page 1

Stories from National Book Trust's 'āzyūik kāshūr
afsanū` Edition 2008, Edited by Dr. R.L.Shant

सिलसिलुवार कथ

सवाल छु कलुक

अमीन कामिल

तँम्य वोनूम हना च़खि सान हू 'चे तरुनय नु यिम कथु फिकरी। यिम छि कोनूनी न्वख्तु। यह बडा नाजुक मसला है। यि छुनु व्वथ देदी तु शेर बतु।'

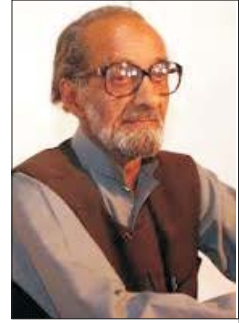
अँम्य ज़ोल सिग्रेट। पान यथ कुन त्रॉविथ फुकरोवुन तालुवस कुन अख गोन दुह्य ल्वम्बुख, युस हनि हनि तन्योव, पँहल्योव तु सॉरिसुय कमरस आव छँकरनु। तु ऑखुरस पनुनि वजूदच बद-ब्वय पथ कुन त्रॉविथ म्चल वावस सुत्य वाव।

मे ऑस छ्वपु लँजमुच। अमा पोज़ सोंचान ओसुस कैह मनोश क्याज़ि छि ऑसु किन्य दुह फुकुर्य फुकुर्य अँद्य पँखिस बद मुशिक बनावान। पानु खबर क्याह क्याह स्वख बूगान मगर बेयन फ़ेख तु तम पुशरॉविथ लसुन बसुन मुशिकल बनावान। बु ओसुस यिमनुय ग्वतन ज़ि अँम्य वोन बेयि 'बोज़, कथ छेनु जिस्मुच। यह धड की बात नहीं। यि छु कलुक मामलु। मे क्या छुम तसुंदिस मुसलस तु माज़स करुन। मे छु मसलु ज़ि लाशेय कलु ओस तु कोर कुन ओस।' तँम्य वोन ज़ोर दिथ 'यह असल मसला है।' मे वँर फिकरा ज़ि लयि ति

क्याह इनसान कलु तु काडि रोस। युस सुर सुर, सु छु अँथ्य कलु खासरि। मे फुटरॉव पनुन्य छ्वपु तु पान सोम्बुरॉविथ पुछमस बँल्य 'अहन हज़, त्वहि छना खबर ओसुस कोर कुन कलु?'

'हम को सब मालूम है' तँम्य वोन दंद चीरिथ हू। 'तिमन छे खबर अँस्य करव गडबड गुटाला तु निमव पनुन बाज़ ज़ीनिथ। मगर हम ने कच्ची गोलियां नहीं खाई हैं। बु गोस तथ क्युत प्रोन माकुन। बु छुस नु राथ द्रास कालजि तु अज़ बन्योस ओरु योर हारु पिलुनॉविथ थानुदार। ति गँयम व्वन्य त्रुह वँरी पुलसु बतु ख्यवान। मे निशि नु व्वटु।'

यि कथ बीठ मे। इनसान हेकि नु अँकिस माकुनस निशि व्वठ वँडिथ। अदु युस दून माकुनन मंज़ ह्यनु यियि, तँमिस छे पानस ल्वति पॉट्य क्रिया कर्मच तु लहज़ हुंज़ सूरथ थावन्य वँरिथ। माकुन गव मांकुन। यथ अंगस चीरिथ गव, तथ व्वथि नु थोद, कोताह ति तँछ्यतोस। ती गव अथ



Episode

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Page 2

*Stories from National Book Trust's 'āzyūk kāshūr
afsanū` Edition 2008, Edited by Dr. R.L.Shant*

लाशि खसु दून माकूनन अंदर ह्यनु ऑस आमच।

मे ऑस पेटय पेटय कथा कनन गॉमुच, अमा पोज पूर ऑसुम नु कैह ति। अवु किन्य ओसुस महज पनुनि जॉन्य खॉतरु कुसुक चोक ज्ञानुन यछान। नतु बु कांह फॉसुल्य ओसुस नु जि न्याय बूजिथ दिमुहा तथ छ्यन। तव पतु योद तिति खयाल आसिहम, दून माकूनन मंज प्यथ ख्यमु हा बुय लिपर। जिनन हेकि कांह क्व-जिन्नय प्यठ बिहिथ। कथि वावुर द्यावुनावनु खॉतरु प्रुछुस मे बेयि 'त्वहि आसि पतु पहन खबर लॅजमुच। नतु कति तुलिहे खाम पोर्युक थांदार त्वहि निशि व्वठ।'

मे बास्यव अॅमिस गव फुर। तिव्याजि गर्दन गॅयस हना हॅज। वुठन फोलुस असुन तु अॅछन फीरुस शेताॅन्य चमक हिश। मगर अॅथ्य सुत्य आयस बुमु चारनु 'यि छे साॅरुय अॅमिस अमु कांसटिपलु सुंज गलती। खबर ज्ञानुहनु?' अॅम्य प्रुछनम। 'अहन हज, क्याजि नु?' मे वौनुस ज्ञाननु करनु रोस्तुय।

'अॅम्य अहमकन रुकोव नु सु नफर।' यि लोग वनुनि। 'मे वॅरुन नु अॅदुर कुन खबर। नतु लगेहे मे दूध का दूध और पानी का पानी साॅरुय खबर। तोति नियि मे पनुन्य काकद दुरुस वॅरिथ।'

'अहन हज, सु ओस कुस नफर?' मे प्रुछुस कथि हना वाश कडनावनुकि गरजु।

'ति छमु खबर? अमु कंसटिपलु सुंद कलु।' अॅमिस खोत जख ह्यु। 'ग्वडु छुख नु बीछिथ ति बनान तु गछान छिम सिपाह बर्ती। यिमन छा काॅड्य? यह मामले की नजाकत नहीं समझते हैं। सु गॅछिथ छुम वनान, यि हज ओस कुसताम गुर्ग सवार। दपान पोशि मर्ग बोनि तल छि लाश पेमुच। दितस जवाब। हयो खराह, तुम ने उस आदमी को छोडा कैसे? सु ओस कुस, कत्युक, तॅम्य ज्ञन आसिहे कत्ल कोरमुत? क्यों? हो सकता है! थांदारस छु आसान दहन कथन सनुन। किनु नु?'

'ओत ताम हज छु पोजुय। बेयि ति वॅरिथ त्वहि ह्यु। अगर नगर मशहूर थांदार! व्वन्य क्याह, अथ छा कैह ठोंठ यिवान?'

'ठोंठ?' तॅम्य मुचरावि रातु म्गल चालि अॅछ। खोवरि अथु थॉवुन पुलसु टूप्य पथर तु कॉर तुलिथ वौनुनम 'ठोंठ शोंठ कोई नहीं है। असि छे यिछु वारयाह खेलु गिंजमचु। साॅन्य काकद छिनु वॅरुच्य। खाम फोरिच थांदारिल चानस ऊर्य। काकज बोल उठेंगे।'

(क्रमशः)

व्यनती

परिम नातह शद

On Covid-19

بیر کیمتہ روگ ہر ادو دیا کر دیا
 دیاں اہتہ کرونا سپٹاہ توڑوہ با
 زگتہ سندس منہز گوقت از اسپر
 مران ساسہ بکری لکھ دوہے جانبا
 چھ وفہی آتش چائی ژر کھ پال چھ
 سپٹاہ گو قہر وفہی کرن جل دفا
 ترے چھے کاینا تھہ کل منڈان ساسنا
 خطا حان کر بس تہ کاس دردشا
 چھہ دشوار ترانن یہ موتک قہر
 کینے چارگر چھنہ ونلن ترے سوا
 اچھن اوش واران شاد ونتی لان
 ژر قوی بار بوزکھ تہ سوزکھ دوا -

व्यनती

प्रेम नाथ शद

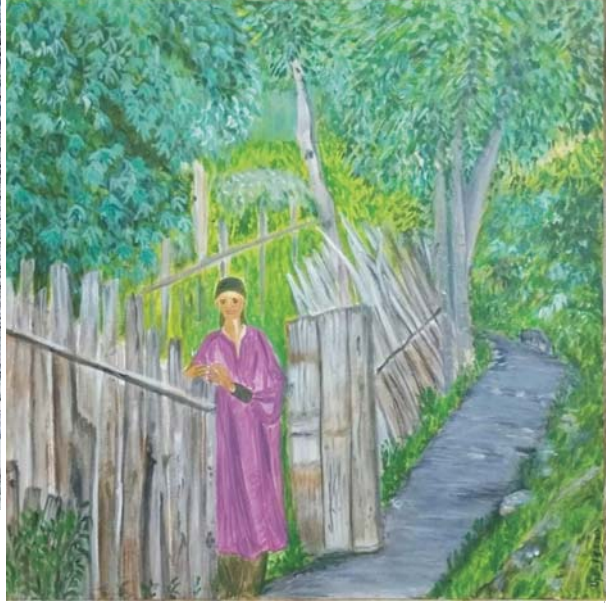


यि क्युथ रूग ब्राघव दया कर दया
 दपान अथ कोरोना स्यटाह बोड व्वा
 जगथ संकटस मंज गोमुत अज अंसीर
 मरान सासु बॅद्य लुख द्वहय जा-बजा
 छि व्वन्य आश चॉनी चु रखिपाल छुख
 स्यटाह गव कहर व्वन्य करुन जल दफा
 च़े छुय कायनाथ कुल मंगान साहयता
 खता माफ कर बस तु कास दुर्दशा
 छु दुश्धार च़ालुन यि मौतुक कहर
 कुहुन्य चारुगर छुनु वुन्यक्तन च़े सिवा
 अँछन ओश वुजान शद व्यनती करान
 चु फॅरियाद बोजख तु सोजख दवा

Photo Feature



Sun & Snow
Image : Imtiyaz Hussain
@hussain_imtiyaz



Village Environ
Painting : Uzma Nawchoo

Margan Top
Photo : JKHMC



Letters to Editor

Dear Raina Sahab,

Namaskar. I just completed reading both the Praagaash of March 2020 and the Zoon Dab Supplement. Whileas the praagaash is as usual the mix of best articles and poetry especially the new poets you have projected including few doctors whom I hadnot read or heard earlier. A great discovery. But lam highly impressed by the Supplement on Zoon Dab. I appreciate your memory of the episodes of Zoon Dab. It was indeed the most popular programme of Radio Kashmir for more than two decades without break. The photographs you have acquired from various sources make it further interesting. Your references to all the concerned artistes and their biographies are very useful and informative to our youngsters. I congratulate you for this masterpiece collection, a valuable Supplement which every Kashmiri would be proud to read, appreciate and preserve in their homes.

It is not very easy to bring out a monthly magazine with supplements. I can understand well as the bringing out of an issue of VAAKH takes my two months time. I congratulate you once again and wish you a very healthy and happy life to serve our community.

Regards,
Roop K. Bhat
New Delhi

**Dear Sir,**

I have gone through Praagaash March edition. I am impressed by its content and the presentation. Multi-linguality has added to its beauty. Zoon Dab Supplement is simply a treat to cherish. My best wishes



are always with you and with your team, Sir.

Dr. Showkat Shifa
Assistant Professor Pediatrics
GMC Anantnag

**Dear Sir,**

Herath Mubarak. I am trying to learn Kashmiri while living outside Kashmir. Are there any resources in English that you would suggest for a beginner to use. I started looking at Wali & Koul's Book but found it a little difficult as it is written from a linguistic perspective while my aim is to learn spoken Kashmiri. I dont know Nastaliq but can read and write Devanagari. Kindly share your Lessons on Devanagari-Kashmiri as well. I am ready to pay for the course.

I am also in touch with Dr. Zarka Batul in England for her feed back on lessons in English.

Aashna Jamal
aashna.jamal3@gmail.com
Timor Leste
(Near Indonesia)

**Dear Raina Sa'eb,**

I have really appreciated over the years how you have single handedly attempted to work towards helping us to be in touch with our mother tongue. I have a humble request to make.

I am working on the history of sources of Saivism in Kashmiri language. Of course, I am aware of popularly known vāks, śruks etc. of Lal Ded, Sheikh-ul-alam, Roop Bhawani, Svachh Kral, Shamas Faqir and many others. I am particularly looking for the unpublished manuscript



Letters to Editor

materials of the Vāks of Mirza Kāk of Hangulgond (there are only some Vāks published in an Urdu book of Sarvanand Koul Premi), Tika Kāk (Tika Rām Ganjoo - he lived at Madan Yar, Habba Kadal) and Bona Kāk of Pinglin, Pulwama. Tika Rām and Bona Kāk had a disciple Thakur Joo Saproo from Gulab Bagh in Ganderbal who has also composed some Vāks.

I am looking for the original manuscripts either in Śāradā or Devanāgarī or Nastaliq. The Vāks of Tika Kāk and Bona Kāk are published in two volumes by Baljinath Pandit but this work has lot of limitations and hence there is a need to look at the original manuscripts. I shall be really grateful if you can publish this note in your magazine. I am aware of all the available material in print, but I shall be truly grateful if anyone can share with me any unpublished manuscripts of the Vāks of these scholars or can let me know where to find them.

Sincerely,

Mrinal Kaul

mrinalkaul81@gmail.com

Mangalore



Dear Raina Sahib,

After going through the article in March 2020 edition ‘Our Customs, Rites & Rituals Yegneopavit or Mekhla’, I have made the following observations for information of all Praagaash esteemed readers:

Abhid (alms) is collected in Bhiksha Patr also. Mekhla (Yagnopavit) is one of the traditional samaskara (rites of passage) the ceremonial ritual by which the young boy is invested with the ‘Sacred Thread’ to symbolize the transference of spiritual knowledge, vedangas (Vedangas mean



‘limbs of the Veda’). There are six auxiliary disciplines in Vedic culture that developed in ancient times, and have been connected with the study of the Vedas. These are: Shiksha, Chandas, Vyakarana, Nirukta, Kalpa, Jyotisha, arts and other skills. Three threads, signify Goddesses Gayatri (thought), Saraswati (word) and Savitri (deed). It also stands for Shiva, Vishnu & Brahma. Lot of interpretations are there and scientific one based on Prana energy is sattva, rajas and tamas. Girls also have upanyanam according to Yajur Veda. Girls wear the threads around the neck in Kashmiri culture, it was followed in very early years.

Thanks & Regards,

Samit Bhatt

bhattsamit@gmail.com

Faridabad



Dear Sir,

This issue of Praagaash and the Supplement Zoona Dab are highly nostalgic. Zoon Dub was a huge hit during our childhood days in Kashmir.

The way you have given the details in Praagaash is simply superb. I salute you for your dedication and passion. You are a source of inspiration for all of us.

Rajesh Raina

Hyderabad



Dear Raina Sahib,

Zoone Dab supplement is a nice addition. Its precursor happened to be Wotal Buji which became popular in 1965 war. Incidentally Mumbai Radio or TV station tried to emulate Zoone Dab but it



Letters to Editor

resulted in mayhem and consternation in State administration and the programme had to be abandoned.

Deepak Budki
New Delhi



Dear Raina Sahib,

Excellent March 2020 Issue. Your Supplement on Zoon Dab is perfect. You have left nothing untold about it. Congratulations.

I found your illustrated collection of 5 short stories for the young 'Pentachord' in my library. It was presented to me by my brother in law and your friend late Ashwani Parimoo.

Regards.

Prof. B. L. Kaul
Jammu



Dear Raina Sahib,

Praagaash is undoubtedly attaining its desired due heights, under your able stewardship. May God Grant you more of physical, moral and mental courage to serve your mother tongue in a befitting manner so that we all Kashmiris, wherever we

are, become proud of our maji-zev. Since the diaspora is not fully conversant with Nastaliq, your Nagari version of the same makes it easier for the readers to understand the published material. God bless us all.

Kindly accept my heartiest Congratulations for the Krishen Joo Razdan Saraswati Puruskar conferred upon you recently by Jammu Kashmir Vichar Manch for your untiring services to our maji-zev.



With regards.

Rajinder Premi
New Delhi



Dear Sir,

I wish to learn Kashmiri, how do I go about it? I live in Gurgaon. I am Kashmiri but we have migrated from Kashmir two centuries back. No one in my household knows Kashmiri. I am 62 years old. Can you please help me.

Sanjay Khar
Gurgaon



Sir,

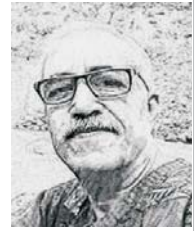
Zoon Dab is very good. It feels so nice to know all the artistes we had once heard on Radio Kashmir. My husband's grandpa Shri Gopinath Kaushik was a very well known figure in Radio Kashmir, Srinagar and Jammu. Also my another relative Shri Kailash Nath Kaul (Maikash) was also associated with the radio.

Supriya Kaushik
Mumbai



Dear Sir,

This is with reference to the Supplement Zoon Dab issued with the March issue of Praagaash. Thanks a lot for reviving my old memories. There was no better programme that humorously commented on



Letters to Editor

everyday life and a feedback to government to attend to problems faced by citizens.

Suren Tiku
Pune, Maharashtra



Dear Editor,

The article on Zoon Dab in Praagaash was very nostalgic. Like every one else, I used to listen to this program regularly. Thanks a lot for refreshing memories of those good old days of the valley. I would like to subscribe to Praagaash. Please let me know the procedure for that.

V.K.Khoda
Bangalore

[Editor replies: There is no subscription for Praagaash. You have been listed on the Praagaash Mailing 2]



Dear Raina Sahib,

Let me at the outset compliment you for a very detailed feature in 'Praagash' on 'Zoone Dab', the classical Radio Kashmir production of seventies/ eighties.



This program used to be a very popular and positive one in Kashmiri language liked by one and all. I grew up listening to this program and jelled up with the popular characters and gave a real feeling of homely conversation in our 'dewan khan', the drawing room.

Zoona Dab was perhaps the single such program being broadcasted on Radio Kashmir, which had no parallel, around that time in broadcasting industry in Indian sub continent. This program highlighted our day to day issues connected with our social, economic and political developments as a very lucid and popular household talk show. It

represented women, children, relatives, domestic help and even elderly people (pensioners), in outlook and the issues of day to day life .

Hope in near future we can have a similar program produced by the Radio Industry in Kashmir and also in rest of the country. I would suggest that a document be generated on 'Zoona Dab' for us to remember our evolution as a progressive and forward looking society besides for the benefit of the students and teachers of 'Mass Communication Education' at Kashmir University.

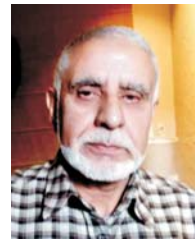
Fortunately we have amongst us the child artists of those days like Ms Nayeema Mahjoor and Mr Arif Bashir, both happen to be my close friends, I wish them all the best, happiness and health. As a grateful community, we need to felicitate them in a befitting manner, as a gratitude and remembrance of their contributions in being part of the countless episodes of Zoona Dab and in other spheres of broadcasting in Kashmiri language. Regards,

Dr. G.N.Qasba
Srinagar



Dear Raina Sahib,

It was a treat to read March issue of Praagaash and the Zoona Dab story. You have really worked hard on it. Thanks a lot for working tirelessly without any self-interest for the preservation, promotion, propagation and enlightening Kashmiri language called Kaashir zaban. God bless you.



Er. Manzoor Nawchoo
Srinagar

Letters to Editor

Dear Maharaj Krishen,

I congratulate you for bringing out the second supplement to Pragaash on Zoon Dab. It was a dream journey back in time to go through the story of this flagship serial program of Radio Kashmir which went



on for an epic period of seventeen years during the sixties and seventies of the last century. It revived the memory of halcyon days in Kashmir when radio used to be a great entertainer second only to the cinema and the picnics to Mogul gardens. More importantly, radio was a vital source of information and education until Zoon Dab provided an additional social platform.

The title, Zoon Dab, was tantalizing and the program stood the test of time. Through witty and satirical conversation sitting in the Zoon Dab (moon balcony) of an archetypal middle class Kashmir family, the radio artists kept everyone spell bound. It was the delivery as much as the content that held you captive day after day. It was entertaining and recreative. The humour left you laughing for the rest of the day and we rued its absence on Sundays. More importantly, it unraveled the woes of common man and woman vis a vis social evils, the official apathy to the travails of citizens, the bureaucratic highhandedness, and the culture of greed and corruption that had begun to plague the fabric of society.

Zoon Dab also helped create a political awareness. It was a healthy diversion for the people from the barrage of corrosive propaganda beamed from across the border from PoK. It was, in essence, a great leap forward in broadcasting. The positive influence of radio on Kashmiris has hardly any parallel to Zoon Dab which identified with the aspirations of common citizenry and became

a sounding board to the authorities.

In the process, an idea was given shape through a new radio idiom that created memorable characters like *Agha Seb*, *Mama Pipji*, *Jaga Pension* etc. Most of the artists that came to be associated with Zoon Dab made a big name for themselves. Truly, accepting a challenge often unfolds the hidden potential and gets the best out of a person.

I happened to know at least one of the pioneers, Padmashri Pushkar Bhan, who has frequented our home several times. He was a multifaceted genius. Alas, after he sustained a head injury, he was never the same again. His creative potential received a great setback. I also happened to be his physician in his later days when he was forced to migrate to Jammu like thousands of Pandits, almost forgotten by the authorities.

Thank you again for a yeoman's service to recreate, and bring a flavor of those times in print. The pictures are perfect and the luminaries stand tall as ever. They have immortalized radio Kashmir and themselves in the bargain.

Dr. K.L.Chowdhury
Roop Nagar, Jammu



Dear Raina Sahib,

I loved the zoon Dab supplement. I remember my grandfather listening to it and we would sit around him and keep asking him to interpret whenever we could not get the jokes. Not only was it fun to see Papaji laughing uproariously but hearing his explanation would make us laugh even more. I was surprised that my husband had not heard about it. Loved the 'Srikanth is Sirikanth'. Thanks for adding that.



Seema Ganjoo
Bandra, Mumbai