



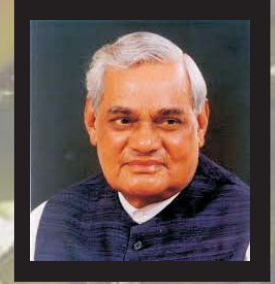
ॐ नमामि त्वां शारदा देवीं,
महाभागीं भगवतीं काश्मीर पुरवासिनीं,
विद्या दायिनीं रक्ष माम रक्ष माम्। नमामि त्वाम्।

Praagaash

Net-journal of 'Zaan'

प्रागाश

‘ज्ञान’ की नेट-पत्रिका



Atal Bihari Vajpayee
1924 - 2018
End of an Era

वर्ष ३ : अंक ३ ~ Vol 3 : No. 3

सितंबर २०१८ ~ September 2018



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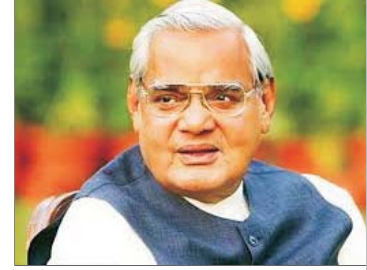
**Ankita Raina (25)
won Bronze in the
Women's Singles
Tennis at the
Asian Games 2018
in Indonesia**

Editorial

- M.K.Raina

End of an Era - Atal Bihari Vajpayee

Bharat Ratna Shri Atal Bihari Bajpayee, former Prime Minister of India breathed his last at the AIIMS on 16 August 2018 at 05.05 PM. He was 93. His mortal remains were cremated at Smriti Sthal with state funeral and full military



honours. Gol announced a 7-day mourning on his death. ABV served as the Prime Minister of India, first for a term of 13 days in 1996, for a period of eleven months from 1998 to 1999, and then for a full term from 1999 to 2004. He is survived by his adopted daughter Namita Kaul Bhattacharya who also lit his funeral pyre.

We at Zaan and Praagaash, as also the Kashmiri Pandit community in general deeply mourn the death of the great leader of India who was not only respected and loved by his own partymen but by all across the political and social spectrums of India.



Zaan : Miles to go

Month of August has been very hectic for all of us at Zaan, preparing for the ZaanFest-2 which was recently concluded at Sharda Sadan, Kharghar. This time we had an additional feature of including fresh talent in singing, mostly girls who were raw but had passion for singing and being part of the Zaan movement. We are greatly thankful to Rita Ji Kaul, who not only spared her valuable time to train them but taught them like her own children. The children not only gave a superb show at the festival but proved that Rita Ji's labour had not gone waste. Zaan

Continued on Page 26

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Religion & Spirituality - Dr. Chaman Lal Raina

Saundarya Lahiri

The *Saundarya Lahiri* is the poetic expression of the *Shri Chakra*. It touches every level of existence and evolution in the inner recesses of one's heart, who understands the beauty of Divine. Always that nameless is given the name of *Matri mayi Devi, Amba, Ambhka*, etc. to the Divine Mother, the very source of all the Devatas.

The *Saundarya Lahiri* is the magnum opus about the Shakti-tradition of Indian spiritual philosophy, authored by *Adi-Shankara*, the great Commentator of the *Brahma Sutra*. *Saundarya Lahiri* is the synthesis of Kashmir *Agamas* and the Southern thought of the Divine mother, revered as *Shri Lalita*. A realization about the 'Motherhood of God' is vivid in the *Saundarya-Lahiri*. Absolute is not abstract alone, it is both static and dynamic. It is 'Poorna'- the complete and whole. The word 'Saundarya' means aesthetic and *Lahiri* means wavelet.



Shri Chakra Mandala/ CL Raina/2013

Therefore, the word *Saundarya Lahiri* means Wavelets of the Divine Beauty.

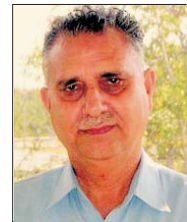
The Divine mother with thousands of epithets, is complete and whole. The 'Poorna' is the attribute of the Mother-creatix which resembles the full moon in the manifest cosmos, as adored in the *Lalita Sahsrnama*. She is *PoorNaand PoorNeshvari*. The 'Poorna' is be adored, seen and understood in its full bloom. That is why the 'Poorna-Prakrti' is adored in the *Shakta Sahsrnamas* of Kashmir as well

Through *POORNA-AHUTI*, at the conclusion of the *Homas/Yajnas*, the mighty self of the cosmic act and adoration is considered to be done, for that event. it falls silent, but not asleep. It is wakeful and receptive to the vibrations of the higher and wider consciousness.

Poorna Ahuti is the essence of the Shakti *Sahsrnamas*. That is why, *ATHI-PHOL* is shared by children, young and old, men, women, Brahmana and Yajmana all alike to show the oneness of the universal spirit within. Agni is the living consciousness in an *Agnihotra*. It is the living moment of mutual ascent of the man and descent of the Divine.

ATHI PHOL is purely Kashmiri concept. A clear view is seen in the Bhawani, Shri Ragnya, Shri Jwala, Shri Tripura- Sundari Sahsrnamas of Kashmir. Tripura-Sundari is the central nerve of the Divine force of the manifestation in purest form of beauty in existence and in transcendence.

**PARAM SUNDARYAI SHRI RAAGNYAI
N A M A H** a n d





SHRI BAALA TRIPURA SUNDARYAI



NAMAH, are the sacred adorations to the Divine Mother, evolved by our great saints of Kashmir. **Adi Shankara** has developed this 'Lahiri- Wavelet' in the aesthetic form to be adored by the devotees, after visiting Kashmir. Saundarya is apparent in manifestation but hidden in the Yoga.

Many translations and commentaries have been written and authored by the devotees, till this date on this wonderful devotional text of *Adi Shankara*. It has great appeal in the minds of the Shakta devotees. Fine expressions of adorations are found in this sacred text. The Murti of Devis have been influenced by the *Saundarya Lahiri*, and the art work related to spirituality is also seen to be influenced by the miniature and other paintings of Kashmir. Kashmir has been gifted with the Saints and Sages, Yogis and Poets, Philosophers and literary critics but the central theme of all such works is in the recognition of Self, known as the *Pratybignya* of the Kashmir Trika Philosophy.

Swami Ram Ji the Great Shaiva Acharya, would teach the *Saundarya Lahiri* and the *Panchastavi* in his Ashram at Fateh Kadal, known as the Trika Ashram of Kashmir. The hidden centres of celestial force open like divine flames to reach to the heavenly spheres, while listening to the mystic experience of that great saint of Kashmir. *Saundarya Lahiri* teaches the beauty of Shri

Chakra , through the Oneness of Shiva and Shakti.

Shiva is transcendent, while Shakti is apparent in the form of physical existence. The higher realization sees the 'Beauty Par-



excellence' in the benign face of the 'Divine mother'. Therefore, Markandeya Rishi visualized the Divine Mother, in the womanhood, and prayed:

"Vidya Samasta Tavadevi bhedah Striyaa Samasta Sakala Jagatsu Tvayi ekaya puritam abbayetad Kaa teStuti stavya paraparokti" (*Durga Sapteshati Chapter 11 Shloka 6*)

O Devi! All the branches of knowledge are your aspects, so are all women in the world. O Ambika - the universal Mother, by You alone this universe is enveloped by Thine grace! What praise thus can be for you in the nature of being of Para Vak - the transcendental speech and beyond the words of Stuti/laudation.

Shri Chakra is Shri YANTRA. We are blessed that we have the SVAYAMBHU CHAKRESHWAR at the Hari Parbat. *The Shloka reads as;* SHRI SHAARIKAY SHARANYE TVAAM MAYI DAASE KRIPAAM KURU--- RINAM ROGAM BHAYAM SHOKAM RIPUNAASHAYA SATVARAM.

To be continued

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My Medical Journey - Dr. K.L.Chowdhury

A Short Stint At Pahalgam

I was the Medical Officer of Primary Health Centre, Pahalgam. It was the only rural posting ever in my career, just for three months from June to August 1964. Yet, that short stint was memorable for many reasons. You couldn't have asked for a better season to be there. Pahalgam was magical, romantic and sublime – the mountains awe-inspiring, the green pastures soothing to the eyes, and the pine woods a climber's delight.

But there are two other attributes to Pahalgam that you don't often see elsewhere. One: the captivating Lidder that forms right in the heart of Pahalgam from the confluence of two freshwater streams one each from the Kolhoi Glacier and the Sheshnag Lake. The river beckons you even before you have entered Pahalgam, and then you never tire listening to its eternal song that backdrops your existence and reaches your subconscious even in your dreams. Two: the beautiful blue sky and the clouds - languid and tantalizing; a poet's inspiration that takes you to Kalidasa's immortal lyric, Meghaduta.

There is a third attribute as well, especially for the devout – the towering proximity of the divine ice lingam inside the Amarnath cave and the most bewitching scenes and spots on the way – Chandanwari,

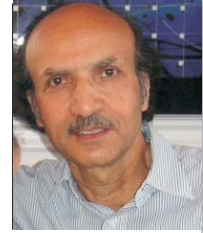
Sheshnag, and Panchtarni – a trekker's paradise, no doubt.

I would never tire sitting by the riverside, or looking across the window, or in the open, at the sky, watching the clouds in their infinite variations, their confluences and drifts, as they materialized from behind the peaks and lingered onto the hills and disappeared as quickly, leaving you wondering at their whims and moods.



My short stay at Pahalgam was eventful. One event is worth recalling. But, before that, a word about my daily routine: The day started with a morning walk into the woods or across the green fields to the historic Shiva temple of Mamleshwara, or up in the villages. Then, a quick breakfast, and an open-air clinic in the sprawling hospital lawns as the Lidder flowed by and the mountains looked on. Sometimes I wondered how people could fall ill in such divine ambience.

At around 1 PM, I walked across the street to my residence for lunch, returning in twenty minutes for the afternoon clinic that lasted until 4 PM. Some patients needed active



Pahalgam : Photo tourism-of-india.com



intervention - suturing a cut or wound, draining an abscess or haematoma, setting a fracture or sprain, or some other minor surgical procedure.

The evening was entirely my own. I would spend it in walks or at the club playing golfing green, or on the bank of the Lidder upstream, or reading. Occasionally, I got to visit a sick tourist in a hotel.



One time, the Civil Surgeon, Anantnag (my health centre was under his jurisdiction) sent me a message that Dr Naidu, Director Health, would be visiting Pahalgam. He gave me no idea about the timing of the visit, nor if it was official or private. We had no phone connections then, and no way to find out the details. Since it was a working day, I asked my staff to spruce up the hospital.

We conducted the morning clinic. I ordered my lunch to the hospital just in case the Director drops in during that period. We finished the second session by four, but there was no sign of the Director.

Exactly at 4:15, I left for my residential quarter. My medical assistant and the orderlies were surprised. "Sir, the Director may come any time; don't you think we should wait for him?" asked Bushan Lal, the medical assistant.

"Look, our duty hours are done. We don't need to wait here. He might have cancelled his visit otherwise he should have been here already. If he does come, he can send for me. I will wait at my residence."

"Sir, should we close the hospital?" he asked.

"I think we should. If he comes, and if he wants to inspect the hospital, you can open it for him and inform me."

Bushan Lal lived in his official quarter within the hospital premises. So there was no way he would miss the Director. But I could

sense his trepidation when I left.

Around 7:30 PM, Bushan Lal came running to inform me that the Director had arrived along with his family. He had received him at the hospital gate and asked if he should open the hospital. The Director said it was not necessary and asked the driver to proceed to the Club.

"Did he look for me?" I asked.

"Yes, sir. He inquired about you. I said you were at your residence, and that we were all eagerly waiting for him."

"Did he ask you to inform me?"

"He said nothing, but I feel he may be expecting you."



I decided not to see the Director. It was evident that he was on a private visit. He had not asked to see me, nor was I bound to meet him after duty hours.

The next morning I went to the hospital as usual and got down to examining the patients. Bushan Lal kept an eye on the road. At about 12:30 he saw the Director's official vehicle driving out of Pahalgam, back to Srinagar. He did not oblige us with his visit. My staff was dismayed, even afraid of the consequences. I tried to

mollify them, but that didn't help much. We carried on with our work.

I forgot about the incident except that the Secretary Club came to see me in the evening to express his surprise that I had not met the Director when all the officials were there to see him. Everyone wondered why I was missing. I should have been the main person with him, he said.

"My job is to do my duty. Beyond that, I am a master of my time. I didn't need to see him if he didn't care to ask for me." He was flabbergasted.

That same evening, the Civil Surgeon sent me a message that I should not leave station without his permission. On the



following Saturday, I had to go home to see my ailing grandfather. I eschewed the Civil Surgeon's message and left for Srinagar but decided to stop on the way at Anantnag to hand over my leave application personally to him.

"Sorry, Dr Chowdhury, I can't grant you any leave," he said tersely.

"But you can't stop me, sir."

"These are the Director's orders."

"I wonder why?"

"There are complaints against you that you are arrogant with the patients and that you left the station on two consecutive Sundays."

"Sir, arrogance is a trumped up charge. As to Sundays, I committed no breach by traveling home on two Sundays. I believe Sunday is an off day for all government employees."

"That is unacceptable especially since any State or Central dignitary might visit Pahalgam and need your services."

"It is a hypothetical question. What facilities do we have here for such dire emergencies? Pahalgam is just two hours from Srinagar."

"I am sorry, this is an order."

"But I must see my grandfather. He is not well. Tomorrow is my off day and I will be back on Monday before ten."

"Dr Chowdhury, you are too young and inexperienced with the guiles of officialdom. Why take unnecessary cudgels with the higher ups."

"I did nothing of the sort."

"You didn't receive the Director despite my advance information about his visit."

Finally, he came to the point. I explained the whole episode. Of course, he must have known it already.

"But you should have waited for him at the hospital."

"I am glad I didn't, because he arrived three and half hours after the scheduled closure of the hospital. That is a lot of time to waste. I am sorry, I can't do that."



"But this is government duty."

"Yes, but not slavery."

"It is slavery. You will get used to it by and by."

"Not my cup of tea."

"You will suffer; then you will remember my words," he warned me.

"I will face it, but not deviate from my principles. I am committed to the Hippocratic Oath and the service rules. None of that enjoins me to wait on my superiors during or after my duty hours. I will give them their due respect, nothing less, nothing more." I said and took the bus to Srinagar.



I got the first taste of my insubordination, as one might call it, when I met the Director in his office a month later to obtain his permission for higher studies. I had received a letter of admission for MD Medicine at Delhi.

The Director refused outright. I knew that nearly a dozen doctors had already been granted no-objection. I named some of them.

"Sorry, I can't permit you. We need you at Pahalgam. This is a busy tourist season."

"How can you pick and choose? Is there a personal grudge against me for something I don't know?"

He looked away from me and said, "Sorry, but you can't go for MD."

"I will go anyways." I said defiantly and left. The rest is history, as they say. I did go for my MD. I was suspended from service and later, dismissed. On my return in 1966, I was reappointed. I lost my seniority in service but it didn't matter, for I got into the Medical College and remained there in various positions until forced into exodus in 1990. I remembered the words of the Civil Surgeon all through my career but never reconciled with his advice. In the process I did suffer, but never compromised my integrity or independence.

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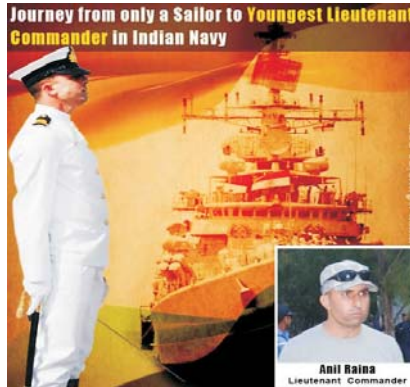
Our Bright Stars - Team Praagaash

Anil Raina - Youngest Lt. Commander

Lieutenant Commander Anil Raina, son of Chander Prakash Raina of Miran Sahib, became the first officer from Jammu to lead a Naval contingent during a Republic Day Parade. He is the first officer from Marine Commandos to lead a Naval Contingent in 2016. He says, "It was my dream to walk on Rajpath while commanding the elite Indian Navy contingent. It is a matter of pride for any soldier who gets a chance to walk on Rajpath amid claps and cheers from the huge sea of people on both sides of Rajpath." He is presently posted at Indian Naval Academy Ezhimala, Kerala as Squadron Commander.

Born in a lower middle-class family, with the father as a shopkeeper and mother a housewife, Anil joined Navy as Recruit after matriculation to support the family even as he was school topper in class 10th in 1999. Raina not only got recruited to the Navy but also climbed up to the rank of a Lieutenant.

His father, Chander Prakash Raina runs a grocery shop in the Ranbir Singh Pura area of the Miran Sahib village from last 40 years. Even though he has about 16 kanals of land



still he runs a shop to meet the household expenses. And while his son, Anil Raina was studying, he used to help his father in the shop. Chander Prakash always supported the dreams of his son. He always wanted his son to become an officer and make his country proud.

Lieutenant Anil Raina still remembers how his parents helped him and paid for his studies till 10th and the way they supported him to get recruited as a sailor in the Indian Navy. He says he cannot forget the sacrifices made by his parents and the whole journey from the rank of a Sailor to Lieutenant Commander. He proudly admits that his father



is a farmer. He still remembers the day when they had no money to buy food and owing to the poor conditions of the house he used to study under streetlights.

While working in Navy, he completed Plus 2 in Correspondence and by his hard work, got selected in Commission Exam in Navy in 2001. He joined Navy Academy Goa in 2002 with Plus Two NDA/Naval Academy Entry Cadets.





During the three-year training at Naval Academy, Anil achieved various special awards and feats. He became the second Cadet in the history of Naval Academy to win Best Tenderfoot and Best Typhoon Awards in the rigorous Jungle Training camps (Camp Tenderfoot happens in the first year and Camp typhoon happens in the second year; Only one cadet is selected as the best cadet of the whole camp).

He was also awarded +2 (Plus Two) grading in Parade Training, the highest grading that a cadet can achieve in his whole training of three years. Only one or two cadets in a course get this. He won Award of Best Master of ceremony for five times during Inter Squadron Dramatics Competition and remained as Chief Editor of Naval Academy's prestigious Magazine 'AHOY' for three term. He Passed out with the Chief of Naval Staff Trophy for Best Cadet in Seamanship in 2005. Anil represented his Squadron in Inter Squadron Water Polo, Football, Hockey, Volleyball and X-Country Running. He passed out with the Degree of B Sc in Naval Sciences from Goa University.

He commanded the Passing Out Parade of Sea Cadets On Board Naval Ship INS TIR in December 2005 and passed out as a Midshipman.

Anil Raina got commissioned in July 2006, after completion of total four years of training. He volunteered to join combat diving course of ten months at Navy Diving School Kochi, Kerala. He got selected for the course



and passed out with the trophy of Best Diver of the course in November 2007. He became first Combat Diving Officer in Navy from J&K. Thereafter, he volunteered to join Navy special forces, Marine Commandos (MARCOS) and got selected for the course in 2008. Passed out in January 2009 with the award of Best Commando in physicals and became the first officer in Marine Commandos from J&K. He was awarded On the Spot Commendation by Commander-in-Chief Eastern Naval Command for counter-terrorist operations in Kashmir in 2013. In 2015, he was awarded On the Spot Commendation by Commander-in-Chief Southern Naval Command for professional excellence.

He said that earlier there were not many options for counseling but now he feels great when he gets the opportunity to guide young people and inspire them to join Indian Defence forces.

Lt Cdr Raina has also been awarded Nao Sena Medal (Gallantry) for successfully planned operation at the Wular Lake as team leader of Naval Marine Commandos in Operation Rakshak on 7 January 2018 that resulted in apprehension of two hard core Hizbul Mujahidin terrorists and an overground worker.

Sources:
indianspecialforces.com
ssbcrack.com
 and Aditya Raj Kaul



Samarpan - Piyaray Raina Saddhak

Aatmbodhan – The Quest for Excellence (2)

[Continued from the August 2018 issue]

Ordinary Perception – *laukika* (Outer perception through sense contact with objects): It is the direct knowledge which arises from the contact of senses (*indriyas*) with the objects (*padharthas*). The knowledge thus, obtained, is generally indeterminate knowledge (*nirvakalpa pratyaksha*) which one gains at first instance by a casual look at an object, as for example a table. Determinate knowledge (*savikalpa pratyaksha*) on the other hand, is the one that is gained by having a second look, to gain the full content of knowledge, as for example other attributes of table, such as its size, quality of wood used, its structure, colour etc. By this definition *nirvakalpa* precedes *savikalpa*.

2) Extraordinary Perception – *alaukika/intuition* (Inner perception gained through mind Extra ordinary perception is the one, which one gets directly from mind, about non objects. As for example people die, ice is cold intuition b) Inference

(*Anumana*) Common experience in the daily lives of people may be described as Inference. Practical success in life depends upon the ability of the individual to draw the correct inference. As for example, when we see smoke, we immediately draw the inference that it is coming from fire, somewhere. The Inference is that knowledge, which is preceded by perception. All perceptible knowledge is expressed in the form of judgment. It is described as reasoning for

another.' It is intended to draw attention to the point under consideration. There are five constituents of inference: 1) proposition or statement (*pratijna*), 2) reason (*hetu*), 3) example (*uddharna*), 4) universal proposition or application (*upanaya*) and 5) conclusion (*nigamana*). 1. Proposition/statement is the declaration what is to be established, as for example there is fire in the forest. 2. The reason is the means for establishing, what is to be established. 3. Example is a familiar instance, which is known to possess the property to be established, and which implies that this property is invariably contained in the reason given. Example forms an important part of inference in *nyaya* logic. 4. Application is the reaffirmation that the object inferred is 'so' or 'not so' as proposed 5. Conclusion is restating of the proposition after reason has been established. A typical example may be cited as follows: i. The far away mountain has fire (proposition) ii. For it has smoke (reason) iii. Whatever has smoke it is due to fire. has e.g. a hearth in kitchen (example) iv. The far away mountain has smoke, such as is invariably accompanied with fire in the kitchen (application) v. Therefore far away mountain has fire. (Conclusion) c) Comparison/Analogy (*Upamana*) It is the knowledge of an object, gained through its similarity to another object, previously well known. The similarity should



● ●

Tarka is a process of questioning and cross questioning within the mind that leads to a particular conclusion.

● ●



be essential, not superficial. As for example, we tell a child that Moon is like a ball, with which he is very familiar. d) Verbal Knowledge/Testimony (Shabda) It is defined as a testimony of a trustworthy

A doctrine is an axiomatic postulate accepted as an undisputed truth and foundation of that philosophy. It may not have universal acceptance.

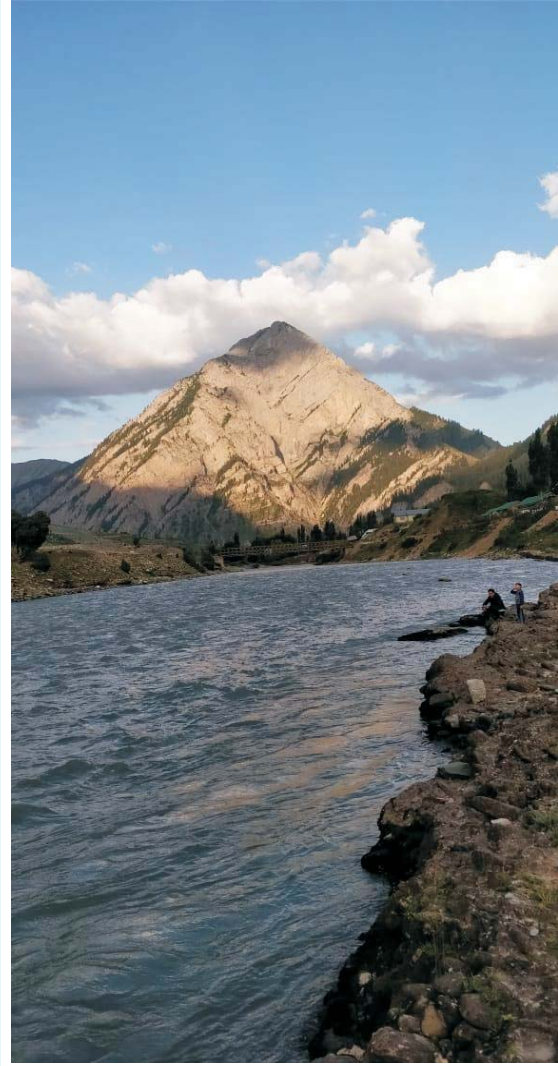
person (āpta), one that knows the truth and communicates it correctly. Words could be about perceptible objects, for example testimony in courts by a witness, diagnosis by a doctor about disease; or it could be about super sensible realities, such as a physicist's statement about atoms, nutritionist about vitamins or seers instructions about virtues. Nyaya system recognizes potency (shakti) of word as its capacity to convey its correct, proper functioning, as word or its use in a sentence. B) Invalid Knowledge (Apramana)/Fallacy Invalid or erroneous knowledge may be the result of wrong conclusion. It is through five senses: touch, state, colour, sight and sound we cognize objects when they feed necessary information to mind. But it may not be the correct information. As for example the person observing the object, may observe the object through a jaundiced eye and thus, convey to mind wrong information that the white conch that he observed, is yellow; or that one may observe a colour-less glass bowl as red, due to the presence of a red rose near it. To safeguard the valid knowledge pramana from

erroneous knowledge apramana, the theory of validity (pratah-praamānya-Veda), proposes many safeguards. A few may be cited as under: i. Doubts (samshaya) Doubt arises as a result of conflicting judgment, about the precise judgment of an object. It may be due to the error in recognition of properties, common to many objects, as for example, a rope for a snake (in insufficient light); or properties, common to many objects, as for example, silver and pearl-shell (which also looks like silver in insufficient light); or from conflicting testimony, as for example, testimony by a witness. ii. Aim/purpose (proyojna) One has to have correct aim/purpose for perceiving the object for its validity. If one does not have clarity of mind about desirable, or undesirable object (proyojna), one may not have the correct knowledge. A player in the game must have a clear aim for winning the match. iii. Example (drishtanta) To establish an argument both parties may use example to prove their view point. Relevant examples may be cited by both the opposing sides, having equal force. Lawyers on both sides of plaintiffs, cite example in favour of their argument to confuse the judge. iv. Doctrine (siddhanta) A doctrine is an axiomatic postulate accepted as an undisputed truth and foundation of that philosophy. It may not have universal acceptance. As for example, the doctrines of various religions may or may not have universal acceptance. v. Hypothetical arguments (tarka) The mind always keeps jabbing, that creates confusion, and raising a smoke screen, for differentiating between

While idols which receive worship may be like statues, but all statues are not idols.

valid and invalid knowledge. Tarka is a process of questioning and cross questioning within the mind that leads to a particular conclusion. As for example, if one observes cow-dung cakes on a wall, put by people in the villages, for its use as fuel, when dried. Hypothetical questioning and cross questioning may involve reasoning like: a. Argument – The cow climbed the wall to put the dung on it. b. Counter argument – No, no, cow could not have gone up the wall, as per common sense. c. Valid argument – Cow-dung must have been put on the wall by a person with some purpose. vi. Discussion (badha) Discussion about a subject between two parties, proponents and opponents, leads to valid knowledge provided both sides are honest and their arguments are free from prejudices. As for example, parliamentary discussions when a bill is introduced which after discussions is passes or rejected. vii. Wrangling (jalpa) Wrangling is form of discussion, when opposing parties, use dishonest means, to prove their point. Both parties produce huge amount of arguments to prove their point. As for example, lawyers arguments in the courts. viii. Unfair interpretation (chala) A statement made deliberately by a person to befool someone or many, by purposely misquoting or misinterpreting the word or a phrase of the opponent and thus, denying the truth. As example, statements of politicians followed by denials when confronted with truth. ix False analogy.(jati). Situation in which conclusion is based on false analogy. As for example, all statues are idols. While idols which receive worship may be like statues, but all statues are not idols.

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Habba Khatoon Peak at Gurez, Kashmir

It is believed that Habba Khatoon came to this place in search of her husband after he was taken to Delhi by Akbar. This is on the old Silk Route to Gilgit. Kishenganga river can be seen in the foreground.

Photo & Text : Suriender Kachroo



Saints & Sages - Smt Vijay Bhan

Sharika Devi – A Saint & Yogini

Great saints are often hidden quiet and discreet. Deviji Sharika was a quiet presence near her great Master Swami Laxman Ju, a world renowned Saint of Kashmir valley, the lost paradise, immersing herself in his service.

Although she was Prakash (illumination of inner moon) herself, yet she assumed a humble role never showing of the spiritual state of her knowledge. But, in her discreet way she was important advisor to devotees, mainly females.

Only a soul like her who was purified by the constant contact with the Lord could act in this way, guiding inexperienced disciples who all were in the ocean of Karma. Sometimes, she would intervene as a mediator. Master could never refuse her humble but firm requests. Sometimes, I used to be in state of desperation, as, the master had rejected me many times. Her one word was reassurance. "He is testing your firmness", she always stated. If for any reason I did not get Prasad she would make it up by giving me prasad and I knew it was he who was giving through her. A few times I was fortunate to see her glory 'Prakash' (inner illumination). She was then bathing in the same light as her master. A light which was flowing from within and flowing all over her body. She then showed me how totally she was established in her nature 'Swaroopa', in a quiet and firm clarity. She once told me in a serious mood that people would come here for all kinds of purposes,



sometimes selfish motives. But some do come for God.

This was her experience of many years at the feet of the master. I often felt, as if, somebody wants to give gold and the receiver only asks for potatoes. She herself had

such gold to give but who was ready to receive it? Sometimes she used to say it is the nature

of the river to give freshness and purity for those who came to give freshness. Her eyes were saying everything swimming up a life at the feet of the Lord they were telling that she had reached the heights of samvesha. They were telling that it requires love, gentleness and firmness and a devotion that is undisturbed by an inner or outer shakings.

She had taken bath in a sea of bliss. She told her master what else was real to say or to do. Kashmir is

gone. Everything was clear in her light of the absolute.

Her master's voice was like this at the time of her niravana, "Go to the abode of Shiva where you belonged. I will also come after six months". And after completion of six months, Swamiji achieved nirvana in Delhi.

Salute to these purities of Kashmir valley.

[Sharika Devi Photo : Courtesy 'Sharika Devi' A Yogini of Kashmir, edited by Neerja Mattoo]

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Re-visiting Motherland - Dr. P.L.Ganju

Destination Chinkral Mohalla – Our Lost Abode

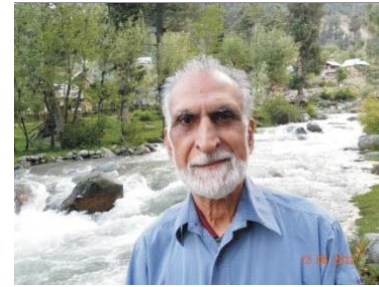
*Blessed are those who live in the land of their birth.
They are doubly blessed if that is a paradise on earth*

The mayhem of 1989-90 in Kashmir, in which hundreds of innocent Kashmiri Pandits, including many of their elite, were killed in cold blood and lacs of their fellow compatriots (almost the entire community) were hounded out of their homes by the local terrorists, was unprecedented in the history of Kashmir. Besides, it demolished the myth of Kashmiriyat, glamorized by the National Conference leaders after coming to power in Kashmir. It also posed a challenge to the secular credentials of the Indian Republic. After 1989-90, the mayhem continued for some more years, when the militants committed sporadic mass genocides of the Pandits in the far flung areas of the Valley. However, in spite of their unfortunate banishment from their ancestral home, the Pandits in exile still yearn to visit their homeland as soon as peace returns there, just to pray to their deities in their erstwhile temples and shrines. At this stage, their living in the Valley as an ethnic, religious community is out of question, even as some odd retired couples choose to pass their time in seclusion there, to avoid the harsh weather of plains.

After the initiation of the bilateral political dialogue between India and Pakistan and the Hurriyat Conference (the last claiming to represent the people of the Valley), there was a change in the strategy of the jihadi

violence. While they continued to target the Indian security forces, the remaining Pandits in the Valley were now mercifully spared, bringing a semblance of peace there. The Indian tourists once again began to flock to the valley in droves and the Pandits did not lag far behind.

In 2005, when the conditions in the Valley appeared to have stabilized, I also decided to visit my erstwhile homeland before the conditions there again took a bad turn. I led a fairly large group of my family members, including my grandchildren, to see how Kashmir looked without its Pandit population. I was also keen to see Chinkral Mohalla (CM), in its new avatar. I had lived here with my parents up to my graduation before leaving for my MSc, in 1953. I returned in 1955 with a first class degree to explore my chances of employment in my own homeland but all in



vain. So I left the Valley for good in search of my livelihood. My three elder brothers had already migrated out of the Valley, one by one, by that time. Thus, we were separated from one another, our parents



Photo: kashmirtourmart



and siblings and our motherland, thanks to the new ruling dispensation in the State at the end of the Dogra Raj

My grandchildren, who were born and brought up outside Kashmir were highly excited at the prospect of visiting this 'paradise on earth'. I was also keen to take them to CM and let them have a glimpse of our erstwhile ancestral house, in which our forefathers had lived for many generations. Our visit to CM was a sort of pilgrimage to pay our homage to our ancestors who had lived there for many generations. It had also an emotional angle attached to it. In 1989, CM, otherwise a nondescript locality, had suddenly sprung to lime light with the martyrdom of one of its rising sons, Pt Tika Lal Taploo, in his own lane of this mohalla, on the 14th of September, 1989, now a memorable day for the KPs.

I understand that, five generations ago, our forefather had shifted from Rainawari to CM and built his house there. He lived in it till it was gutted in the great fire of Srinagar in 1892. His son, our great grandfather, who was a builder (called by the appellation Tamir, rather than Ganju), had raised a new house on its debris. After him, our family lived in this house for three more generations. Ours was the latest one that lived in Kashmir, that too only for a short time, before migrating out. At our behest, only my younger brother (BN) remained behind with our parents. He had a civil engineering degree from BHU and had served with the Indian company that built the Jawahar Tunnel in collaboration with a leading German firm, commissioned by Government of India. He sought employment with the state

government and, fortunately, succeeded. Thus, he lived with our parents and youngest brother at CM, for some more time. Soon, our youngest brother (JL) also left Kashmir for good, for his higher education. When our parents had departed, BN shifted to Natipora but was hardly posted in Srinagar. After his retirement, he could not go back to Kashmir to live in his own house at Natipora, because of the Kashmir mayhem in 1989. It was sold out soon after in a distress sale.

Our grandfather had performed our yajnopavit in CM in 1935, with great pomp and show and our father married all of us, brothers, there, before saying sayonara, lest we brought home non-Kashmiri brides from outside, just to seek blessings.

While eking out our living in 'exile', we regularly visited our homeland to see our parents and participate in our family functions. Last we visited the Valley consecutively for three years, in 1986 to undertake my first ever yatra to the holy cave of Amarnath, in 1987 to celebrate the marriage of our son,

and in 1988 to participate in the marriage function of a close relative. Each time we visited the Valley, its breath taking scenes got etched on the slate of our consciousness deeper and deeper but what happened in the next two years is history. Kashmir was now a forbidden land for us.

Visiting Kashmir after the mayhem:

The day finally dawned on us to visit Kashmir again after 17 years. In Jammu we first prayed at the shrine of Mata Vaishnov Devi at Katra, for our safe journey and redemption of the Valley from the strangle-hold of the terrorists.



Photo: kashmirlife.net

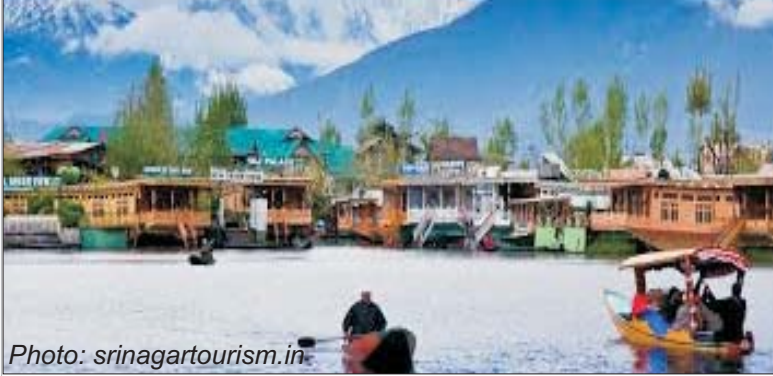


Photo: srinagartourism.in

We went by road to enjoy the scenic beauty of the journey. After a few hours, we were meandering through the sylvan Banihal Road to emerge out of the Jawahar Tunnel overlooking the Valley, in the dusky, shimmering moonlight. The nip in the air was already perceptible, which was soothing to our parched bodies and the aching souls. When we wheeled on deeper into the Valley and passed through the newly formed boughs and arches of the young chinars and willows and the long groves of the lofty swaying poplars, we imagined that the mother earth had worked diligently in our absence, to welcome us back into her bosom. We arrived in Srinagar late in the evening and alighted at the Nehru Park point to be lost in the seething crowd of the pleasure-loving local people and the tourists, as yet another batch of the Indians from 'abroad'. The night-scene of Dal Lake with its illuminated house boats, with Hari Parbat in the back ground, reflected in its waters was mesmerizing. We stayed at Shankar Bhavan overlooking Nehru Park.

Visiting Chinkral Mohalla:

The next day, on the 17th of May, we woke up with the breaking of dawn over the valley and watched the bewitching scene of the Dal in its morning glory, with a range of

mountains in its backdrop, which were also reflected in its still waters, as if they were painted there. Then we went out for a morning walk up the boulevard, with the lofty poplars on the right, swaying majestically, in unison. For that day, the first thing on our agenda was to visit Chinkral Mohalla. We hired a few 3-wheelers at the Gagribal point, turned right at Dal Gate and drove along the embankment of the Tsoont kol, through Bishamber Nagar, Barbarshah, Sathu and Kralkhud, alighting at the Habba Kadal chowk just to look around the area whose Pandit population had suffered immensely during the last terrorist onslaught. The area wore a gloomy look and appeared to have lost its old-time charm and glamour. We walked down the main road, lazily, up to Chinkral Mohalla (CM), in a mini-procession, casting painful glances at the erstwhile shops and residences of the banished Pandits.

(To be continued)

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Photo: liveindia.com



The Story of My House - Prof R.N.Bhat

The Home That Was

My home, a three-floored house, at village Fohar in Anantnag District was constructed in the thirties of the last century by my late grand-father who drowned at a young age in a river in Martand-Achabal region. My father late Jagarnath was born later. My grandmother, the young widow, brought up my father very tenderly. The family had sufficient arable land whose produce fed them comfortably. All the arable land was tilled by six families of tillers. My father after completing schooling joined 'Cooperatives' at Anantnag. This enabled him to take care of his mother as well as the cattle and kitchen-garden. Our house faced west, and it was situated at the bank of the village river that brings water from the gigantic Sheshnag via the majestic Lidder [Iambudari]. The Shiva temple Bhuteshwar, facing west, is situated on the opposite bank of the village river. My mother was a regular visitor to the temple. My father used to worship there on Sundays only when he would be home.

I and my three siblings grew up in that house till we graduated to move out for higher education or jobs. Three of us graduated from Government College Anantnag, while our sister graduated from Government College for Women, Anantnag. After graduation, I joined Kurukshetra University in Haryana wherefrom I earned M.A. and Ph.D. in Linguistics and M.A. and Ph.D. in Hindi literature. My siblings got jobs after graduation and they were posted at Srinagar. I used to travel to my 'home' every now and then. In the winter of 1989-90, there was catastrophic turmoil across the Kashmir valley, and my parents, siblings, and their families ran out to save life and limb from the danger that

caused displacement of nearly half a million persons of all ages, professions, and backgrounds out of their cozy homes and hearths.

I went to my village in 2008, nineteen years after our displacement. I reached there in the afternoon. I met my childhood friend GA Dar who has built a beautiful house on the main village road. He retired from the post of District Treasury Officer. He was the first Muslim graduate of our village. The village road connects the two Pahalgam roads viz Anantnag-Pahalgam Road and Bijbehara-Pahalgam Road.

Later, I went to the lone Hindu family that continues to reside in the village. My 'home' is no longer in existence. A three-four feet high heap of clay is what my 'home' has turned into. I imagined the windows on the first floor where we used to go to bed, the open and elongated windows at the second floor where we used to spend summer months in happiness and joy. I was informed that the 'house' was reduced to clay in a fire caused by electric short circuit. However, no 'report' was made of it!

I entered the Bhuteshwar temple on the opposite bank of the village river. The Shiva Murti seemed to have reduced its height! Absurd, I told myself. The village river is no longer broad and clean. I did not like to have a bath with that muddy water! I went away from that place the next morning and returned to Jammu a day later.



Representational Photo: Courtesy openhemagazine.com

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काव्य - त्रिलोकी नाथ धर 'कुन्दन' प्रेरणा



लोकनाथन कलाकार है, कलाविद्ध है।

छोटी छोटी तीलियों से बड़े बड़े
जलपोतों के नमूने बनाता है।
उन्हें रंगों में रंगता है, बंधनवार से सजाता है।
कुशल हाथों से बनाता है, आतुर नयनों से देखता है।
बड़े चाव से, शौक से और गर्व से
प्रस्तुत करता है ग्राहक के सामने
अपनी उत्कृष्ट कला को।
कोई पारखी उचित दाम दे जाता है और
ले जाता है अमूल्य इस उपहार को।
लोकनाथन फिर लग जाता है अपने काम में,
नये नमूने के निर्माण में।
इस काम में उसकी पत्नी का भी बहुत योगदान है,
तीलियां चुनने का, रंग घोलने का,
सजावट का सामान जुटाने का।
यूं तो उसका सामने बैठना ही
अपने आप में योगदान है।
कला में तल्लीन होजाता है लोकनाथन उसे देख,
एकाग्रता मिल जाती है उसे।
वही उसकी प्रेरणा है, यात्रा-पथ का दीपक है।

अचानक एक दिन
उसकी पत्नी परलोक सिधार गई।
लोकनाथन उदास हो गया।
उसका काम में मन नहीं लगता,
उस से उसकी कला छिन गई, कौशल छिन गया।
वह कल्पना-शून्य हो गया और उत्साह विहीन।
वह न तीली उठा पाता, न जोड़ पाता।
पर वह अधीर हुआ
कला को पुनर्जीवित करने के लिए।
उसे अपनी पत्नी चाहिये, प्रेरणा स्वरूप।
उसे अपनी कला चाहिए, पत्नि-प्रेम का प्रतिफल।
वह अपनी कला में
उसी का प्रतिबिम्ब देखना चाहता था।
काश उसके पास उसका कोई चित्र ही होता।



Photo courtesy: dailyecho.co.uk



पर कोई चित्र भी कहां था उसके पास,
केवल स्मृति थी।
करे तो क्या करे ?
अचानक उसे याद आया,
कुछ वर्ष पूर्व पासके नगर के एक समाचार पत्र में
उसकी कला का विवरण छपा था,
साथ छपा था उसका चित्र,
पृष्ठ-भूमि में खड़ी थी उसकी कलत्र।
वह तुरंत उठा और चल दिया नगर की और।
वहां पहुंच उसने सम्पादक के सामने गुहार लगाई,
वह गिड़गिड़ाया।
सम्पादक सहृदय थे।
उसकी व्यथा कथा सुन द्रवित हो गये।
बड़ी खोजकर चित्र निकाला और उसे सौंपा।
चित्र लेकर लोकनाथन प्रसन्न-चित्त घर लौटा।
उसे कमरे की दीवार पर टांग दिया,
और जुट गया कला के निर्माण में।



वह कला में संलग्न और
उसकी चित्र-लिखित पत्नी उसे निहारने में तल्लीन।
एक अद्भुत समां बंध गया उस कमरे में,
दिव्य प्रेम की छत्र छाया में दो प्रेमी,
एक कलाकार और दूसरी उसकी प्रेरणा।।

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हँसना मना है

बैंगन का नौकर नहीं हूँ

बैंगन की सब्जी की अकबर बादशाह प्रशंसा कर रहे थे। बीरबल भी बादशाह की हां में हां मिला रहे थे। साथ ही अपनी तरफ से भी दो चार शब्द बैंगन की प्रशंसा में कह गये।

एक दिन बादशाह के मन में आया कि देखें बीरबल अपनी बात को कहां तक निभाते हैं। यह सोच कर बादशाह बैंगन की निंदा करने लगे। उस दिन भी बीरबल ने बादशाह की बात का समर्थन किया तथा बैंगन के दुर्गुण भी बताये। बादशाह को यह सुन कर ताज्जुब हुआ और बोले, 'तुम्हारी बात का यकीन नहीं। कभी प्रशंसा करते हो तो कभी निंदा करते हो। जब मैं ने बैंगन की तारीफ की तो तुम ने भी ऐसा ही किया। और अब मैं निंदा कर रहा हूँ तो तुम भी ऐसा ही कर रहे हो। ऐसा क्यों?' 'बीरबल ने नम्रता पूर्वक कहा, 'आलम पनाह। मैं आप का नौकर हूँ, बैंगन का नहीं।' यह सुन कर बादशाह खुश हुआ।



गवाह

गांव के झगड़े में एक अमीर किसान ने गुस्से में आकर एक गरीब किसान को गोली मार दी। उसे मृत देख कर अमीर किसान ने अपने वकील को तार देकर बुला लिया, 'केस लडने के लिये पहले से तैयारी करके रख लो। मज़दूरी मुंह मांगी मिलेगी।'

वकील ने भी तार देकर जवाब भेजा, 'रात की गाड़ी से आ रहा हूँ। अपने साथ दो चश्म दीद गवाह भी ला रहा हूँ।'





Saints & Sages - Rattan Lal Bhat

Guru's Blessings

On one auspicious day in the summer of 1956, our village Hushroo in Budgam district of Kashmir got a God's gift, Guru Maharaj Swami Nand Lal Ji came to stay here permanently after persistent requests of His devotees.

The scenic surroundings and an aura of spiritual serenity of the place made an ideal abode for Him. The residents of the village decided to construct a suitable dwelling hut for the convenience of Swamiji and his followers visiting him from far and wide. Word about his arrival spread across the surrounding villages and the construction work began in right earnest.

It was the time of my summer vacation at school; I was fortunate to be included in the team for construction that some village elders including my father were asked to manage effectively. My bosom friend, Piaray Lal Kaul hailing from Hushroo had a tremendous dedication for construction work of the ashram. The idea about this was basically conceived by his father, Pt. Shivji Kaul about whom it was said that he was a noble man, an ascetic with a serene look on his face; that he had reached a deep state of meditation and had realised the knowledge of truth by following strictness and severe asceticism. He was known to have realised the nature and acquired powers to eliminate the human suffering by suggesting necessary steps.

I was in the eighth standard then. Guruji was happy with my dedication and swiftness as a boy going in front for everything. He was

kind to give me and my friend sugar crystals at the end of day before we used to leave work for home.

Guruji sat under the shade of a gorgeous chinar tree with lush green surroundings in the foot of a hill-ock. Nearby flowed a stream of crystal clean water. The spot made a splendid sight. Water trickled from the hill side green surface and flowed in a thin stream jumping over pebbles producing gentle sound amid fluttering of birds around their nests in the trees. The sight made me think that God might have first touched this spot to produce that heavenly ambience when He conceived life on the earth.



In front of Swamiji sat a number of devotees on mats spread on the ground. They chanted bhajans and sang devotional songs to sweet music played by the singers on harmonium and rabab. Those assigned duty at the construction site had jobs specified for each under the guidance of experienced men. A portion of land in one far corner was earmarked for excavation of clay to be used for making bricks. On the other side, carpenters were at work fabricating doors, windows, etc. A group of female followers worked in other spheres such as kitchen, housekeeping, maintenance etc. The guru's presence rejoiced everybody's heart. It was His warm, kind feeling the disciples plunged in and strove with to see a grand hut come up in a short time. We had His blessings, and our devotion made our dream



come true. Those on construction job said that they had no fatigue at the end of the day; instead they gained energy rather doubled.

After the vacation the schools opened. My visits to the place continued as before. I skipped week-end periods to visit the ashram, pay respects to guru maharaj to my heart's content and pray to him in deep confidence: "Bhagwan, I love you with all my heart, heart and soul."

My brother bought for me a new bicycle. I used it to commute between my home and the ashram to be able to spend more time with the guruji for inner peace. I felt wellness of heart and mind guiding me in many ways thereafter. Swamiji showered a rain of opportunities on me in the course of my life ahead. In front of him I always sat in meditation when there was nothing important or urgent to be done at the Ashram. He was impressed by my swiftness and devotion. Days and years passed. From school to college and then on to the stage thereafter I had grown up to be a bread-winner for the family and get married at age 19. Jobs came handy. I trained as a Turner at SISI, Govt. of India for nine months; worked as a civil Draftsman in the State Engg. deptt. for over a year (got part-time job as Tutor for children of an effulgent bureaucrat's family), then as an Assistant in the Civil Secretariat after a highly competitive examination for government

posts through a newly constituted Staff Selection Board; and moved to Govt. of India service after 1-1/2 years in J&K state job. The opening got me appx. 300% hike in salary after Swamiji asked me repeatedly to " express your wish and get salary you need to support your aged parents as well." Here, began my quest for truth. I hadn't realised that the welfare of parents was my priority. I had it in my perception that abundance of all material things was for my individual consumption only. Four years from here I tried yet another change of service to an autonomous financial institution in the State of J&K set up under Central Act. The change paved way for a brighter future, for I got opportunities to undergo special training courses at leading Bankers colleges at Delhi, Pune and Mumbai and to sharpen the professional skills required for the job in consequence whereof I got higher and better ranks every second year in the organisation.

Guru's blessing is one precious thing being embraced by fortunate lovers of God. I am a firm believer in guru's blessing that comes to people bearing positive attitude and good intentions while dealing with others. Our efforts are supported by unique, invisible push in the form of His blessings. All, in short, is the effect of guru's blessings because the teachings of our guru are the established rules of the Nature. Day in and day out I saw miracles happen. People came to Swamiji for solution of new and newer problems - some sick for decades, rejected and having been turned away from hospitals prostrating themselves before the supreme master here for compassion and help; some suffering on account of losses for one reason or the other, parties pleading before the lord for justice to prevail and a variety of claims and counter claims bearing blows and wounds of human suffering for divine remedy.

(To be continued)



कहानी - त्रिलोकी नाथ धर 'कुन्दन' मुर्गियाँ

मैं श्रीनगर के एक छोटे से मुहल्ले में रहता था। इस मुहल्ले में मुश्किल से दस पंद्रह ही घर थे। परन्तु आपस का मेल मिलाप सभी मुहल्ले वालों में बहुत अच्छा था। दुःख दर्द में एक दूसरे का साथ देना, एक दूसरे की खुशी में सम्मिलित होना और एक दूसरे के काम आना यहां के लोगों का चलन था। लोग आपस की चिन्ता भी करते थे और सहायता करने को तत्पर भी रहते थे। इस मुहल्ले में सारे वासी कश्मीरी पंडित थे परन्तु थे भान्त भान्त के — थे तो वे भी मनुष्य ही। मनुष्य तो प्रकृति से ही अलग अलग स्वभाव के होते हैं। प्रत्येक घर के साथ एक छोटा उद्यान भी था परन्तु साहिब वालों का बगीचा औरों से कुछ बड़ा था। इसमें अंगूर की एक बड़ी बेल थी जो एक छज्जे पर छत जैसी फैली थी, दस बारह सफेदे के पेड़ भी थे और चिनार का बृहत काय एक वृक्ष भी। मुहल्ले वाले सभी नेक और सीधे सादे थे परन्तु दो घर कुछ निराले, दूसरों से भिन्न थे। ये लोग गायें भी रखते थे और मुर्गियां भी पालते थे। गाय रखना तो ठीक था परन्तु

मुर्गी पालना इस समाज में कुछ असामान्य था जो लीक से कुछ बाहर की बात थी। एक घर वासुदेव का था और दूसरा लस्स कौल का।

वासुदेव वालों के पास एक हृष्ट पुष्ट मुर्गी थी, काले पंखों वाली। यह दर्जनों अंडे देती थी। घर वाले खूब अंडे खाते थे, कभी उबाल कर, कभी ऑमलेट बनाकर और कभी अंडों की सब्जी पका कर। विशेष कर घर के छोटे यह सब्जी चटकारे लेकर खाते थे। और भी मुर्गियां थीं पर यह थी विशेष। इसे लाड से अंडे वाली कहकर इंगित किया जाता था। दूसरी और लस्स कौल के यहां ढेर सारी मुर्गियां थीं। वे भी अंडे देती थीं और उन पर बैठकर चूजे उत्पन्न करती थीं। विशेष कर इनमें एक लाल पंखों वाली मुर्गी थी जिसके सब से अधिक चूजे थे। इसे लाड से चूजेवाली कहकर इंगित किया जाता था। यह बड़ी नखरे वाली



थी और इसे अपने चूजों पर नाज़ था। यह स्वाभिमानी भी बहुत थी और इसी लिए रूठती भी बहुत थी। कभी कभी इसका दूसरी मुर्गियों के साथ झगड़ा या मन मुटाव होता तो यह साहिबों के बड़े बाग़में अपने चूजों को लेकर छिप जाया करती थी। प्रायः अंगूर की बेल के नीचे गुम सुम बैठती और



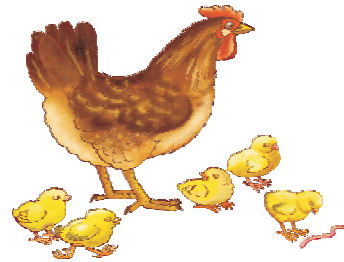
जब तक दूसरी मुर्गियां मुर्गे आकर मना न लें वापिस नहीं आती।

अंडों वाली मुर्गी कभी चूजोंवाली मुर्गी से मिलती तो फुदक जाती। यह दर्शाती कि मैं कितनी स्वतंत्र हूँ परन्तु वह भी अपने चूजों का अभिमान ठाठ से दर्शाती। गर्व से अपनी मुंडी हिलाती। फिर देर तक दोनों कुट कुट करती, राम जाने एक दूसरे को क्या कहती थीं। शायद एक अपनी निरंकुशता का बखान करती और दूसरी गर्व करती दर्जनों चूजों की माँ होने का। कोई घर वाले इन्हें चावल या कुछ और खाने के लिए डाल देते थे जिसे ये नाच नाच कर खाते थे और आपस में न जाने क्या बतियाते थे। यूँ तो सभी मुर्गियां अपने अपने घर में कमरे में बिछी घास पर अंडे देतीं पर कभी कभार यदि किसी और घर में दे देतीं तो वे लोग अंडे लाकर उनको दे जाते। वासुदेव कहा करते थे, 'अपनी मुर्गी ही खराब न हो तो दूसरों के घर अंडे क्यों दे आये? यह तो हमारे पडोसियों की शराफत है कि वह आकर अंडे हमें सौंप देते हैं नहीं तो आजकल के जैसे हालात हैं कौन ईमानदार होता है। वे क्या स्वयं अंडों का सेवन नहीं कर सकते थे? हमें पता भी नहीं चल पाता। हम यही सोचते कि मुर्गी ने अंडे देना बंद कर दिया है।'

इन दोनों घरों के पास मुर्गे भी थे। वे प्रातः बांग देते और सारे मुहल्ले को जगा देते थे। देर से उठने वालों को बहुत बुरा लगता पर करते तो क्या करते, पडौस ऐसा था और रहना यहीं था। वैसे मुहल्ले में एक ठिठोली प्रचलित थी। जैसे ही बांग सुनाई देती लोग पूछते कि मुर्गा किस घर का था, वासुदेव का या लस्स कौल का? और फिर सब ठहाके लगा कर हंस पडते। एक दिनकी बात है मुझे कहीं जाना था। मुर्गे की बांग ने

मुझे जगाया। मैं उठकर तैयार हुआ। कपडे पहने और निकल आया घर से। गली में क्या देखता हूँ कि एक मुर्गा चूजेवाली मुर्गी से उलझ पडा है, खूब तू तू मैं मैं हो रही थी। ज़ोर की टुक टुक से स्पष्ट था कि मुर्गी बहुत नाराज़ है और उसके अहं को ठेस लगी है। लगता था मुर्गा लस्स कौल का था, उसने बांग देकर चूजेवाली मुर्गी के आराम में विघ्न डाला होगा। जभी वह बौखलाई थी और लडने पर उतर आई थी। कहने लगी थी कि तूने मेरी भी नींद खराब की और मेरे बच्चों की भी। थी तो चूजेवाली मुर्गी, सहन कैसे करती? वह उठी और सभी चूजों को लेकर साहिबों के बाग में जाकर छिप गई। मुर्गा परेशान, करे तो क्या करे। दूढ़ने लगा उसे, सारा मुहल्ला छान मारा पर उसका कहीं अता पता नहीं मिला। वह कहां मिलती। वह तो कोप भवन में गई थी। मैंने अपनी ओर से इशारों ही इशारों उसे बताने का प्रयास किया कि वह साहिबों के बाग में छिपी है परन्तु उस मूर्ख को मेरे इशारे समझ आये तब ना?

मुर्गा उन्मत्त हुआ। पागलों की भान्ति एक गली से दूसरी गली, एक प्रांगन से दूसरे प्रांगन, इस बगीचे से उस बगीचे घूमता रहा, अपनी प्रिय चूजेवाली मुर्गी को खोजता रहा, दूढ़ता रहा। खाना पीना उस बेचारे का छूट गया। सूर्यास्त होने वाला था। मैं साहिबों के घर अपने सहपाठी से मिलने गया। हम दोनों घर के बरामदे





पर बैठे बातें कर रहे थे कि अकस्मात मेरी दृष्टि बाग की ओर गई। क्या देखता हूँ कि मुर्गा वहाँ अन्दर आया था और अपनी प्रिय मुर्गी को देख कर उछल पड़ा। अब लगा वह उसे मनाने, अनुनय विनय करने। ऐसा लगा कि बड़ी मुश्किल से वह मान गयी। जाने क्या प्रलोभन देने पड़े उसे? तब जाके उसने घर लौटना स्वीकारा और घर की ओर चल पड़ी। वह दृश्य देखने वाला था। आगे आगे चूज़ोंवाली मुर्गी, उसके पीछे सभी चूज़ों की फौज और अन्त में थका हारा लुढ़कता हुआ बेचारा मुर्गा। चूज़ेवाली की शान की जीत हुई थी



और प्रेमी मुर्गा हार गया था। मेरा मित्र और मैं खूब हंसे, सोचा नाज़नीनें जहाँ तहाँ ऐसी ही होती हैं।

अगले दिन मेरा लस्स कौल के घर जाना हुआ। वहाँ जाकर मैंने गये कल की सारी गाथा उनको सुनाई। वे प्रसन्न हुये और उनका अहं भी सातवें आकाश पर जा पहुँचा। कौल साहब कहने लगे, 'अजी मैं क्या बताऊँ, यह हमारी लाडो मुर्गी है ही ऐसी अभिमानी ऊंची नाक वाली। इसे चूज़ों का इतना अभिमान है कि अपने को किसी से कम तो आंकती ही नहीं। वैसे भी यह सिर उठाकर चलती है परन्तु जब

चूज़े इसके साथ हूँ तो इसके गर्व का पारा बहुत ऊँचा होता है। फिर मुर्गी भी तो किसकी है? यह कहते हुये उनके माथे पर भी गर्व की लकीरें खिल उठीं।

कुछ दिन बीते मुझे वासुदेव के घर जाना पड़ा। उधर इधर की बातें हो रही थीं कि इस घटना का भी प्रसंगवश मैंने वर्णन किया। मैंने विस्तार से लस्स कौल की मुर्गी का सारा वृत्तान्त उन्हें सुनाया। वे तनिक गम्भीर हो गये। उन्होंने सारी बातें फिर से विस्तार में मेरे से सुनी और कुछ सोच में पड़ गये। फिर सहसा वासुदेव जी ने घर के सभी सदस्यों को तत्काल बुलाया और लगे कहने, 'सुनो! आज से अंडे खाना बिल्कुल बंद। कोई अंडों का सेवन नहीं करेगा। हमारी मुर्गी भी अंडे सेंक कर चूज़े पैदा करेगी। समझे! वह भी शीघ्र ही चूज़े वाली कहलायेगी और चलेगी शान से मटक मटक कर। हन्मारी मुर्गी किसी प्रकार से भी लस्स कौल की मुर्गी की तुलना में पीछे न रहने पाये। देखते रहना महीने दो महीने में ही यह भी चूज़ेवाली कहलायेगी, और इसमें भी स्वाभिमान जगेगा।

यह सब देख सुन कर मैं फिर हंसा। सोचा, 'वाह रे मानव तेरे रंग ढंग निराले। आज तुम्हारी ईर्ष्या और स्पर्धा का यह रूप भी देखना था।'

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श्रीरूपभवानी रहस्योपदेशः

करि सूर्य उदय चलि गटुकारय
सहज विचार तथ सारबूद

The darkness of ignorance will vanish and the Sun of knowledge will lead us to 'Sahaj Vichar' - the innate reflection of the Immutable and the essence of Divine knowledge.



From the Pages of History

Persecution of Kashmiri Hindus - II

One of the big tasks completed by Malik Kaji Chak and one of the major commands of Amir Shams-ud-Din Muhammad Iraqi carried out by him was the massacre of infidels and polytheists of this land. It happened like this:

During the government of Malik Musa Raina (1501-1510? AD) all the depraved heretics of this land had been converted to Islam. But with the help of some of the chiefs of this land, some of them had reverted to the customs of the infidels and polytheists. These apostates had resumed idolatry. Some of the infidels related that during the hours of offering prayers and worshipping of idols, they would place a copy of the holy Quran under their haunches to make a seat to sit upon. Thus idol worshipping proceeded even while they sat on the divine book. When the news and details of these doing were brought to Amir Shans-ud-Din Muhammad Iraqi, he summoned Malik Kaji Chak to him. Accompanied by Malik Ali and Khwaja Ahmad, his two counsellors and administrators, Malik Kaji Chak presented himself before the venerable Amir Shams-ud-Din Iraqi, who declared to them, "This community of idolators has, after embracing and submitting to the Islamic faith, now gone back to defiance and apostasy. If you find yourself unable to inflict punishment upon them in accordance with the provisions of Sharia and take disciplinary action against them, it will become necessary and incumbent upon me to proceed on a self-imposed exile and in that case you shall not stand in my way at the time of departure. Since Malik Kaji Chak, prior to his assumption of power and authority had promised him that he would never deviate from or disregard his wishes

and injunctions, therefore in deferance to his wishes, he held consultations with his counsellors and administrative officers and decided upon carrying out a wholesale massacre of the infidels. Their massacre was scheduled for the days of the approaching 'Ashura'. Thus in the year 1518 AD during the Ashura, about seven to eight thousand infidels were put to death. Those killed were the leading personalities of the community of infidels at that time, men of substance and government functionaries. Each of them wielded influence and sway over a hundred families of other infidels and heretics. Thus the entire community of infidels and polytheists in Kashmir was coerced into conversion to Islam at the point of the sword. This is one of the major achievements of Malik Kaji Chak.



Editor Praagaash adds: Baharistan-e-Shahi bears testimony to the fact that during the times of Malik Musa Raina, almost entire community of Kashmiri Pandits was murdered or converted. And those left behind by chance or by luck, were coerced into conversion to Islam at the point of sword. It is but natural that those who did not agree to convert must have been murdered brutally, thus finishing an entire race of Pandits. May be, it was here that only 11 families of Kashmiri Pandits survived the onslaught and managed to keep themselves alive, giving birth to the proverbial saying 'Kaeshiri rudie kahay garae'.

Zaan Archives

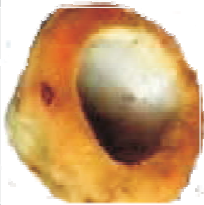
As told in Baharistan-e-Shahi

Six Diacritical Marks of Kashmiri Script

अँ, अॄ, अृ, आँ, ऐ, ओ



Vahraat Yaaaji



Back then in our Kashmir homes, Vahraat or the rainy season meant stomach ailments, infections, tummy upsets, and the ladies of the house would swing into action. Green leafy Lissa

would be bought from the bazaar, or those lucky enough to have a vegetable garden in their backyard, plucked them fresh. All the children were given Lissa baths to protect them from catching the bug.

Lissa was also cooked into a kind of vegetable to be had along with Yaajis made out of rice flour with walnuts in them. They were an amazing monsoon treat. I give below the method of making them the way my mother prepared them. Wish you Happy Vahraat...Yaajis taste just as good during our Mumbai Monsoons.

YAAJI

INGREDIENTS:

Rice flour	1 kg
Walnuts	250 g
Zeera (cummin seeds)	1 tbsp
Mustard oil	200 to 300 ml
Salt to taste	

METHOD:

Soak walnuts in water for a couple of hours, peel off as much skin as possible and

break into small bits

Mix all the ingredients together, along with a table spoon full of oil and form a soft but firm dough

Grease your palms, take a handful of dough and make thick cups, size of Khos, and thickness of about 4-5 mm.

Ideally these are best cooked in an earthen ware pot or "ledge" as we used to back home in Srinagar. However a thick bottomed patila or even your pressure cooker will do.

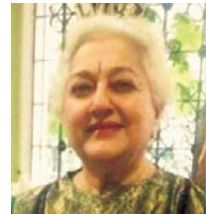
Preheat the pan, add the oil and allow to reach smoking point

Switch off the heat for a while, add one cup of water. The idea is to steam the yaajis like idlis, but with oil to make them crisp

Place the cups upside down in the oil and arrange them in a circle. Cover with a tight lid. If using pressure cooker, just fit the lid without the pressure valve

Switch on the heat on high till the oil and water come to a boil

Lower heat and cook for



Urmila Dhar Zutshi



*Dishes & Recipes
will be a
regular feature
in Praagaash.*



Your contribution is welcome.



about 20 to 30 minutes.

You need to check after about ten minutes and turn around the Yaajis so that they cook evenly. Repeat this after another ten minutes. Continue cooking on low flame till the water dries up and the yaajis are done

Yaajis are usually had with a sour green leafy vegetable called Lissa, available in Kashmir. But since that is not available to us we can have them with Palak or Spinach, cooked spicy and a little sour.

Contact author at: urmilaz@gmail.com

Editorial

From Page 01

considers Rita Ji as one of the torch bearers of the movement and we are sure, with her support, we will walk miles and miles before we sleep. A report on the Zaan Festival appears separately in the interior pages along with the photographic glimpses which we are sure readers will enjoy.

We started a couple of new columns in the August issue of Praagaash, columns which would keep our traditions, our history and our language alive and educate our young generations all about us and our past. One such column is 'Great People to Remember'. In spite of our invitations and reaching people through various modes of communication, we have not been able to get much material on this topic though we are aware of many great

personalities of our community whose contribution to the society was immense. We again appeal to our readers to contribute to the column and let our youngsters know about those heroes of our community whether they were sung or remained unsung. Let us bring them to the fore.

Then again we have a page 'Your Own Page' reserved for people including children who have achieved or done something worth sharing with the community. We are not getting much feedback on this. We request people to come forward with their achievements and achievements of their children along with photographs if any, to enable us to share it with our biradari. We will also publish small poems or stories written by children, their meritorious class results, participation in extra curricular activities at their institutions, paintings, artwork and all that counts to encourage them and other children. Kindly do not shy. Your Own Page is waiting for you.

A good news from Indonesia. Our own Ankita Raina (25) won the Bronze in Women's Singles at Asian Games 2018 in Indonesia. Congratulation from Zaan & Praagaash.

Kashmiri Pandits' Association, Mumbai is presenting the Cultural Programme HARUD at Rang Sharda, Bandra West, Mumbai on 8 September 2018 in association with the theatre group VOMEDH from Jammu. It is our duty as members of the KP community to encourage the young artistes and provide financial and moral support to both KPA and Vomedh. Let us all be there.

Last but not least, Praagaash has appointed Lokeshi Pandita of Airoli as a Trainee Asst. Editor. Congratulations Lokeshi.

Contact editor at: rainamk1@yahoo.co.in

कॉशुर परुन छुनु मुश्किल
दफ कल गछि आसुन्य



Our Shining Stars - Team Praagaash

The Rising Poetess – Anshul Aima Kaul

Anshul Aima Kaul is a young poet, furthering her stature as a prolific writer on recent release of the collection of her poems named 'Patte - Zindagi Ek Safar'. The book carries 61 poems written in Hindi and attracting attention of stalwarts of the literature including that of Dr. Agnishekhar and Dr. R.L.Shant. We have not read all the poems contained in the book but have gone through some which we reproduce on these pages. These poems are a pointer surely, to the capabilities of a young writer. We wish her a bright future.

Anshul Aima had her primary education in Army School, Udhampur and later did her 12th from Nagmani School, Jammu. She did her B.E. in Electronics and Communication from Govt. College of Engineering, Jammu. She started her job with Infosys Technologies, Chandigarh and Pune. Anshul later joined Tech Mahindra and was there for six years as senior solution designer before she joined Infosys Pune again where she is working as a senior consultant. She has travelled to US and UK on various official assignments.

Anshul Kaul, daughter of Prof Ashok Aima of Borivali, Mumbai is married to Mr. Remu Kaul. She lives at Pune and has a four year old daughter Reansha. Anshul has also done postgraduate diploma in customer relationships management from Symbiosis, Pune.

Anshul started writing poetry at the age of 8 years. Her poems in English were published

in Daily Excelsior, Jammu, DAV Young World, Punjab, Poets Today, Kolkata which is an international journal of English poetry, and so on. Poets Foundation, Kolkata awarded her for her English poetry at an impressive function held at Jammu University. Poets Foundation also published



her book of poems MOODS, displayed at the World Book Exhibition, Kolkata.

Anshul's Hindi poetry has been published in Shiraza of J&K Academy of Art, Culture & Languages. Her English poems have been translated into Hindi and Kashmiri by Dr. Agnishekhar, Dr. Premi Romani and Prof. O.N.Chrangoo. Dr. Agnishekhar has this to say about her "Anshul Aima is a sensitive, brilliant and rising poetess. She had attracted people's attention from her very first collection of poems. It is hoped, she will be a class apart from the trend prevalent

here."

Three poems from her 'Patte - Zindagi Ek Safar':

कविता अधूरी न रह जाए

चारों तरफ शोर मचा है
आग फैली है चारों ओर
रोता बच्चा काँप रहा है
लोग सिमटे बैठे घरों में





मैं जल्दी से घर पहुँच जाऊँ
कविता अधूरी न रह जाए।

नभ है धुँए से काला
सडक खून से लाल रंगी
कोई मेरी आवाज़ नहीं सुनता
सन्नाटे में हर कोई डरा हुआ
घर को आवाज़ देती हूँ
कविता अधूरी न रह जाए।

खून किसी का बह गया
घर किसी का जल गया
कांप उठा दिल मेरा
लडकी का सुहाग उजड़ गया
इस घाव को घर में भरूंगी
कविता अधूरी न रह जाए।

मनुष्य मनुष्य की जान का दुश्मन
जीवन मृत्यु बन रहा है
सबकी आँखों को नम करके
नभ में काला साया छा रहा है
कल लिखी थी कविता मैंने
आज उसे पूरा करना है
मर न जाऊँ घर पहुँचने से पहले
मेरी कविता
कविता अधूरी न रह जाए।

बारिश की बूंदे

कब बूंद गिरे
मैं नाचूँ
यूँ तो
रोक नहीं कोई

टोक नहीं

आज भी नाच सकती हूँ
गोल गोल झूम झूम कर
नृत्य का आनन्द उठा सकती हूँ
पंख खुशी से बनाकर
मोर की तरह पंख फैला सकती हूँ
कदमों में फुरती भरकर
हवा के साथ आसमान से बातें कर सकती हूँ, पर
जब बूंदें गिरेंगी
मैं नाचूँगी।

हर पसीने को बूंदों ने बहा दिया
बूंदों ने मुझे भिगो दिया
एक बूंद पर बूंद पडी
बूंदों की लड्डी बनी
बूंदों की माला पहने
मैं झूम झूम कर रो पडी
मैं नाच रही
अब बूंद बरसी
मैं नाच रही।

आँखें हैं पर नज़र

आँखें खुली हैं मेरी
दिन डलते रात होते
देखती हूँ

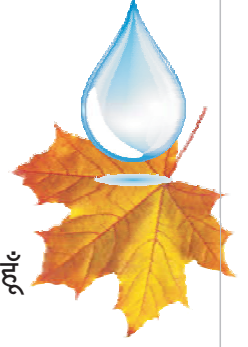
पर देख सकती हूँ केवल

आखरी घर पर मुडती सडक तक।

चिड़ियाँ देखती हूँ

उडान के लिए तैयार

पर मैं साक्षी नहीं बन पाती



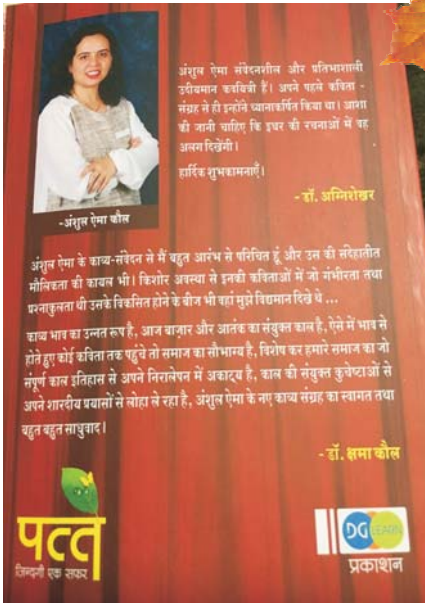


उसकी यात्रा की
आँख देखना चाहती है
नज़र साथ नहीं देती।

सूखा पीला पत्ता देखती हूँ
ज़मीन पर पड़ा हुआ
आसमान में सफर करने लगा
हवा के नए झोंके के साथ
पर मैं ना जान पाऊँगी उसकी मंज़िल
आँखे देखना चाहती है
नज़र साथ नहीं देती



देखती हूँ बहती नदिया
नित डोलती
किनारों के संग, संग
पर मैं जी न पाऊँगी उसका मिलन
समुंद्र के साथ
आँखे देखना चाहती हूँ
नज़र साथ नहीं देती

अंशुल ऐमा संवेदनशील और प्रतिभाशाली
दूरदर्शन कविका हैं। अपने पहले कविता -
संग्रह में ही उन्होंने ध्यानकर्तित किया था। असा
की जानी चर्चित कि इधर की रचनाओं में वह
अलग दिखती।
हार्दिक शुभकामनाएँ।
- डॉ. अमिरोडर

अंशुल ऐमा के काव्य-संवेदन से मैं बहुत आरंभ से परिचित हूँ और उस की संवेदनात्मक
मौलिकता की कायन भी। विशेषकर अस्या से इसकी कविताओं में जो संभिरता तथा
प्रनाकुलता थी उनके विकसित होने के बीच भी वहाँ मुझे विद्यमान दिखे थे...
काव्य भाव का उन्नत रूप है, आज वातावरण और आतंक का संयुक्त काव्य है, ऐसे में भाव से
होने हुए कोई कविता तक पहुँचे तो समाज का तो भाग्य है, विशेषकर हमारे समाज का जो
संघर्ष काय शक्ति से अपने निःसंकेत में अकार्य है, काव्य की संयुक्त कुच्छेदों से
अपने शारीरिक प्रयोगों से लोहा ले रहा है, अंशुल ऐमा के नए काव्य संग्रह का स्वागत तथा
बहुत बहुत साधुवाद।
- डॉ. शमा चौहान

पत्त
विमलनी एक सफर

प्रकाशन

भजन - स्वामी कृष्ण जू राजदान शंकर दिवता संज्ञ अस्तुती



बंद कॅरुनस बु बाशे, जगतुचि वालु वाशे।
म्वकुलय चानि आशे, शिवनाथु अविनाशे।।
बावु सुत्यू निशि यिमुयो, हरुम्वखु वॅन्यु दिमुयो।
मुह गटि हुंदि गाशे, शिवनाथु अविनाशे।।
कोलास कोहु छारथ, दारनाथि द्यानु दारथ।
सथ च्यथ आकाशे, शिवनाथु अविनाशे।।
तार दिम मुहि वावस, मायाथि दॅरियावस।
कड दूखु नावि पाशे, शिवनाथु अविनाशे।।
समसारु के सरय बो, हरु नावु सुत्यू तरय बो।
कास संकट च्यथ प्रकाशे, शिवनाथु अविनाशे।।
ज़पऽ शबनम दारे, पपि ब्योल तपु वारे।
कांह फोल गछि नु हाशे, शिवनाथु अविनाशे।।
हे भोलानाथु सादय, आवाहनु नादय।
सानि बोज़ शुर्य बाशे, शिवनाथु अविनाशे।।
कृष्णस आछ चॉनी, बख्युस पाप प्रॉनी।
शापन कर तु नाशे, शिवनाथु अविनाशे।।

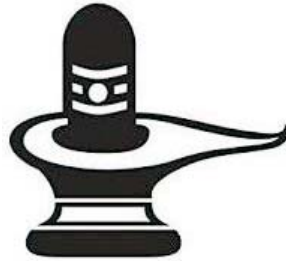




COMIC TALES FOR CHILDREN

Based on the Folk Stories of Kashmir
Concept & Creation

Deepak Durgaprasad Bhatt



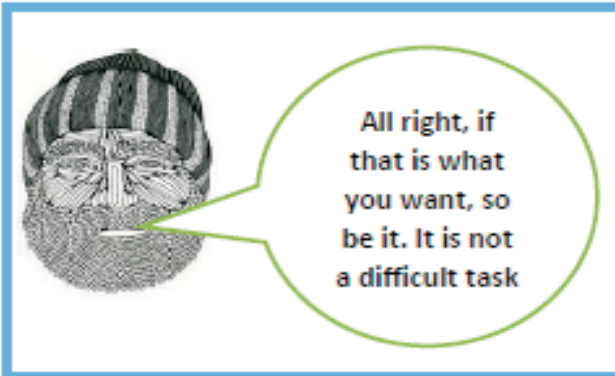
Contact Artiste at: deep_bhat@hotmail.com



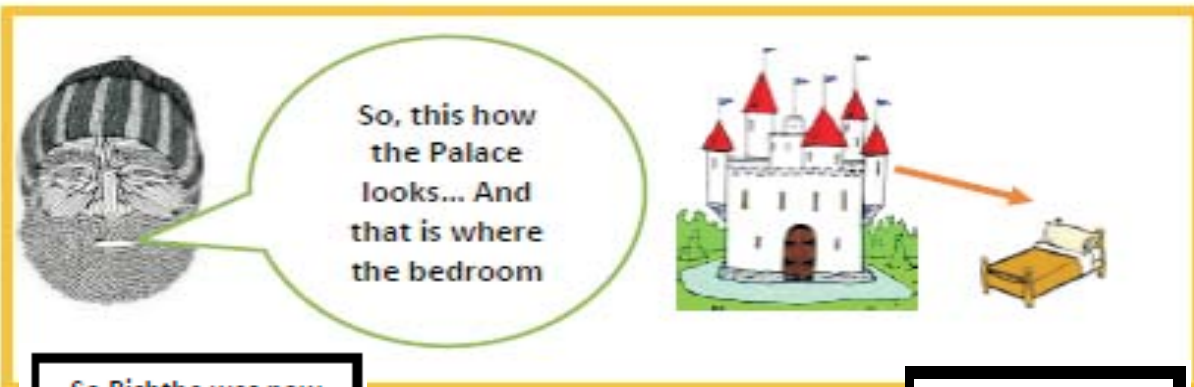
Mahadev Bishtha - The Thief - 2

Authored by : Braj B. Kachru

Comic created by: Deepak Durgaprasad



After that He began thinking and did a Recce of the Palace for 4 to 5 days



So Bishtha was now ready with a plan... That night when King went to sleep he snuck up through a pipe and reached the Bedroom



Next, he kept the Ants' near Maharaja's feet

COMIC TALES FOR CHILDREN

Created by

Deepak Durgaprasad Bhatt



Mahadev Bishta - The Thief



Lo and behold
Maharaja
started feeling
uncomfortable



Ooh...What is
happening...why
am I feeling so
itchy on my
legs...Let me take
down the Dhoti
and sleep

And Raja
took off his
Dhoti and
threw it
away



Great the
King has
taken of his
Dhoti...Now I
can collect
this

And he fled
to the jungle

The next day



Hello
Folks...Here is
the Dhoti of the
Maharaj...I
made him take
it off



Looking at the
Dhoti the Gang
members were
amazed and happy



Sardaar we
proclaim that
you are the best
ever Thief and
we are proud to
be in your gang

Next time : King & the Shepherd

COMIC TALES FOR CHILDREN

Created by

Deepak Durgaprasad Bhatt



कहानी - म.क.रैना

चोट (२)

(मूल कश्मीरी 'वटखूर' : हिंदी अनुवाद - लेखक)

कहीं कोई आदमी शहतूत के पत्ते काटता या शहतूत का वृक्ष काटते हुये मिलता, उससे ज़ोर ज़बरदस्ती करके पैसा वसूल करता। जो पैसे नहीं देता, उसके ऊपर केस चलाने की धमकी देता। पहले पहले वृक्षों के साथ छेड छ़ाड करने वालों को पकड़ने के लिये गश्त भी लगाया करता था पर समय चलते वह सब छोड दिया। अब तो लोग सीधे उसके घर पर ही आ जाते और हिसाब किताब करके चले जाते। हाँ, हर दिन शाम को गाँव के बच्चों के साथ बैठना और उन्हें शहर का सच झूट सुनाना वह कभी नहीं भूलता। वह कहता, “शहर में हर एक के पास मोटर है। जिस के पास मोटर नहीं वह तांगे पर चढ़ता है। पर तांगे पर चढ़ने वालों को लोग हक्रारत की नज़र से देखते हैं। शहर में दस दस मँज़िला मकान होते हैं।



बहुत सारे मकानों में मोटर तीसरी मँज़िल तक जाते हैं। शहर के दो कालेजों में विलायत से आये लडके भी पढ़ते हैं। शहर में बारह अस्पताल हैं। सब से बडे अस्पताल में पाँच सौ कमरे हैं। एक एक कमरे में दो दो सौ बीमारों के रहने की जगह है।” क़ादिर ने पूछा, “अब की बार तुम शहर जाओगे तो हमें भी घुमाने के लिये ले जाना।” जीलानी ने जवाब दिया, “तुम्हें शहर में थोडे ही चलना आयेगा। देखते देखते गाडी के नीचे आ जाओगे।”

जीलानी एक बार अपने पिता के साथ पठानकोट गया था। वहीं उसने रेलगाडी देखी थी। रेलगाडी में सफ़र तो नहीं किया पर उस के डिब्बों को अंदर से और बाहर से भरपूर देख लिया था।



पहली बार रेलगाडी के डिब्बे के अंदर जाकर उसकी चीख निकल गई थी, “मेरे खुदा! रेलगाडी के अंदर ही बाथ रूम और संडास!” पर आज ऐसी बात नहीं थी। उसने रेलगाडी और उसके सफ़र के बारे में जो जो किस्से कहानियाँ सुनी थीं, वह सब कुछ वह गाँव के बच्चों को इस अंदाज़ में सुनाता जैसे उसके सामने हुआ हो। रमेश ने पूछा, “तुम कितनी बार रेलगाडी में सफ़र कर चुके हो।” जीलानी ने

जवाब दिया, “अनेक बार। मेरा हर दूसरा दिन रेलगाडी में ही गुज़रता था।” यह बात किसी हद तक ठीक भी थी। जब तक वह अपने पिता के साथ पठानकोट में रहा, वह तक़रीबन हर दिन रेलगाडी के अंदर घुस कर खिडकी पर बैठ जाता और दूसरी तरफ से चलने वाली रेलगाडियों को देखता। जीलानी के बिना टिकट स्टेशन के अंदर जाने की वजह से उसके पिता को कई बार जुर्माना भी भरना पड़ा था।

जीलानी बच्चों को एक के बाद एक कहानी



सुनाता। “एक दिन गाँव का एक आदमी सूट बूट पहन कर रेलगाड़ी में बैठा था। मेरे सामने ही उसकी सीट थी। खिड़की के बाहर से उसे किसी ठग ने आवाज़ दी। ज्योंही उसने खिड़की से बाहर देखा, पीछे से एक और ठग ने उसकी जेब से बटुआ उड़ा लिया। गाँव वाला बहुत रोया पर क्या कर सकता था।” तारिक ने पूछा, “तुम्हें कैसे पता चला कि वह गाँव का रहने वाला था।” जीलानी को तारिक का सवाल करना अच्छा नहीं लगा। उसने कहा, “तो शहर का था क्या? अरे, शहर वाला होता तो वहीं उसका सर फोड़ देता। शहर वाले की आठों इंद्रियाँ सतर्क रहती हैं।” कादिर सोच में पड़ गया कि शहर वाले की आठ इंद्रियाँ कहाँ कहाँ होती हैं। पर पूछने की हिम्मत न हुई।

जीलानी कहता गया, “एक बार और मेरे साथ एक लड़का सफ़र कर रहा था। वह बाहर कहीं डाक्टरी की ट्रेनिंग ले रहा था। उसने फीस के पाँच सौ रुपये अपने तकिये के खोल में छिपा कर रखे थे। सुबह जब वह नींद से जागा, देखा तकिया मौजूद है पर पैसे गायब हैं।” कादिर ने पूछा, “वह लड़का शहर का था या गाँव का?” जीलानी के कुछ कहने से पहले ही रमेश बोल उठा, “डाक्टरी पढ़ रहा था तो शहर का ही रहा होगा ना!” जीलानी चुप रहा। उसके गले से आवाज़ ही नहीं निकली। उसको चुप देख लड़कों ने कहा, “एक और कहानी सुनाओ।” जीलानी ने उंगलियों से रगड़ कर दोनों आँखें साफ़ की। पानी पिया और गला साफ़ करके बोला, “अच्छा सुनो। पर कोई सवाल नहीं करेगा।” लड़कों ने



उसकी बात मान ली। जीलानी ने बोलना शुरू किया, “एक बार एक पंजाबी मेरे साथ सफ़र कर रहा था। वह जूते उतारे बिना ही सो गया। पूछने पर उसने बताया, “जूते कीमती हैं। कोई उठाकर न ले जाये, इसलिये पहन कर ही सोता हूँ।” सुबह जब उसकी आँख खुली तो क्या देखा कि जूते तो पाँव में ही हैं, पर उसके तलवे किसी ने काट लिये हैं। पंजाबी छाती पीटने लगा। बाद में पता चला कि उसने जूतों के अंदर सोना छिपा कर रखा था।” कहानी सुन कर लड़के सकते में आ गये। सुहैल ने जीलानी से पूछा, “तुम्हें रेलगाड़ी में ड़र नहीं लगता था?” जीलानी ने कहा, “हम सात समंदर का पानी पी कर आये हैं। हमें कैसा ड़र?”

छः महीने बीत गये। एक दिन जमाल साहब के भतीजे अशफ़ाक़ साहब उनके घर पर आये। वह असल में दिल्ली में रहते थे और घूमने के लिये कश्मीर आये हुये थे। अशफ़ाक़ साहब की दिल्ली में कश्मीरी शालों की दुकान थी। जमाल साहब और शफ़ीका से



जीलानी की तारीफें सुन कर वह बहुत खुश हुए और उसने जीलानी को अपने पास दिल्ली ले जाने की इच्छा जताई। जब अशफाक साहब ने जीलानी के माता पिता से इस बारे में बात की तो वह राजी हो गये। फ़ैसला हुआ कि रमज़ान का महीना निकलते ही वह जीलानी को तार भेज कर अपने पास बुला लेंगे।

दिल्ली जाने की बात सुन कर जीलानी की नींद उड़ गई। उसे एक एक दिन एक एक महीने के बराबर लगने लगा। “खुदा नजात दे। अब वह बेकरार है जाने के लिये! नहीं तो यहाँ की नौकरी भी बहुत अच्छी थी। फिर यह तो बहुत मेहनत करने वाला लड़का है, ऐसा वैसा नहीं है ना?” शफ़ीका दुलारी को सुना रही थी। जब से सलीमा के साथ शफ़ीका की तू तू में हुई थी, तब से वह ज़्यादातर दुलारी के पास ही आती थी। पर दुलारी के सामने उस की ज़्यादा नहीं चलती थी। वह अध्यापिका थी ना, शफ़ीका के गलत अंग्रेज़ी शब्दों को तुरंत पकड़ लेती थी।

आख़िर वह दिन आ ही गया। जीलानी को दिल्ली आने का तार मिल गया। वह खुशी से फूले न समाया। “तीन दिन बाद ही निकलना है तो कल ही शहर जाना होगा।” गाँव के बच्चे उसके जाने से बहुत दुखी थे। यद्यपि जीलानी उन्हें हर दिन फटकारता और ताने देता था, फिर भी वह उससे बहुत प्यार करते थे। अगले दिन जब जीलानी शहर जाने के लिये ताँगे पर सवार हुआ तो बच्चे फूट फूट कर रोने लगे। जीलानी पर इस का कोई असर न हुआ। वह खयालों में दिल्ली पहुँच चुका था। शफ़ीका ने उससे कहा, “मेरे बच्चे, सफ़र में सावधान रहना। खुदा नजात दे इन लुटेरों से। वह तो कहीं भी आकर लूट लेते हैं।”

जीलानी ने ताँगेवाले को चलने का इशारा किया और शफ़ीका से बोला, “हमारा क्या बिगाड लेंगे? हम तो शहर वाले हैं।”

तसरे दिन जीलानी बस से पठानकोट पहुँचा। टिकट लिया और रेलगाड़ी में बैठ गया। उस की सीट



खिड़की के पास थी पर वहाँ एक नवयुवक बैठा हुआ था। जीलानी को देखते ही वह उठ खड़ा हुआ और दूसरी जगह जाकर बैठ गया। जीलानी ने अपना ट्रंक और बैग ऊपर की बर्थ पर रखा और सीट पर बैठ गया। एक थैली थी जो उसने अपने हाथ में रखी। दूसरी तरफ एक दाढ़ी वाला बैठा था जो जीलानी के ट्रंक को तक रहा था। यद्यपि उसने जीलानी से कोई बात नहीं की पर जीलानी ने उसको देखकर ही पहचान लिया। उसके मुताबिक दाढ़ी वाला चोर था और उससे सम्भल कर रहने की ज़रूरत थी। जीलानी उसके बारे में सोच ही रहा था कि दाढ़ी वाले ने पूछा, “कहिये! कहाँ तक जाना है?”

(क्रमशः)

Contact author at: rainamk1@yahoo.co.in



Rita Kaul Special

My Life My Passion - Rita Kaul

My Journey as a Musician

One evening as I relaxed in my terrace garden in Mumbai, reminiscing with a hot cup of kahwah tea, my thoughts flew back to my childhood. In my mind's eye, I saw myself as a cherubic six year old child, fondly called 'Dolly' by my family, being told to sing by my aunt Shanta Kaul whom I lovingly addressed as Jigjaan.



To Jigjaan goes the credit of my early preamble into the world of music. She would make sure I sang every single day without fail. Each song was chosen by her - someday it would be a song sung by Lataji and some day it was Ashaji. Even the verses to be sung were selected by her, and she decided how much time I could allot to each song.

Apart from a discipline of sorts, Jigjaan also imparted to me a great self confidence. She taught me to take pride in singing to the extent that I felt no hesitation in singing any song at any given time, anywhere, without reserve. One of my great favourites at that time was '*In aankhon ka rang ho gaya gulabi*'. In this almost magical manner, I was as if mesmerized, gradually drawn towards music.

My mother being a Sitar player, music was in my genes; apart from being a doctor, my father who was also a stage artist recognized this streak of talent in me. By the time I was 8 yrs old, I was put under the able teacher Shri Sambhunath Sapor. It was under his

guidance that my actual training began and I understood the nuances of music, at the young age of 15 years.

I passed the radio audition test in Kashmir, thanks to the immense praise and appreciation of my guru. Passed B.Music from Allahabad Prayag Sangeet Samiti in flying colours. Sang more than 250 original composed Kashmiri and Hindi songs on radio and television since the age of 15.

I am forever grateful to my father and Jigjaan who not only encouraged me to perform in remote areas on the Kashmir border, but also to start teaching, when I was still just 15. My students comprised of doctors and engineers, who I often admonished for not having done their practice. Very soon I began to be known as the 'Koel of Kashmir' and gained fame as a singer of repute.

I joined Srinagar University to study Masters in Political Science. It would be remiss on my part if I did not mention my friends and batchmates. Ragging in college campus was very much in vogue though perhaps not in the violent form it is prevalent these days. However I was fortunate to have made great friends, who protected me and put a stop to the constant bullying of the boys.



In 1971 I was the leading voice in the Nationally Acclaimed Opera 'Shuhul Kul', written and directed by late Padmashri Dinanath Nadim. This



musical drama took me to a different high altogether, while performing as 'Poshnool', a rare bride in Kashmir, who sings in a heavenly manner.

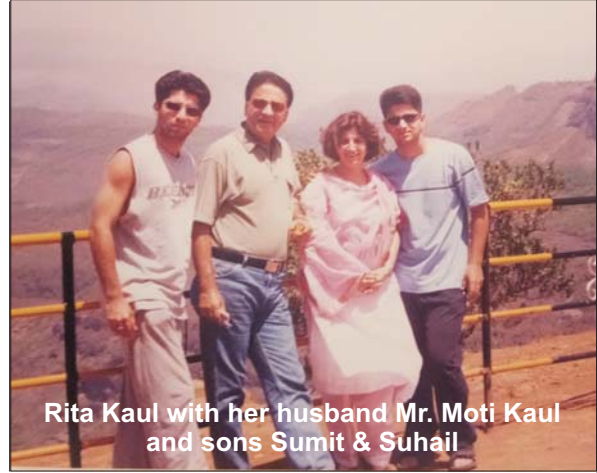
Mrs. Indira Gandhi happened to be present in Kashmir to watch this opera and was simply overwhelmed by the performance. She specially sent for me to sing before her. She would tell everyone that I resembled her grandmother. On another occasion, she introduced me to her aunts telling them to note the striking resemblance between their mother and me.

In Delhi at the end of one of my performances, she gave me a standing ovation which truly touched my heart. I felt honored to be felicitated by the then Prime Minister of our country.

In 1975 I got married to Mr. Moti Kaul and came to live in Bombay. My husband has been my biggest source of inspiration and strength since my marriage. Whatever I am today I owe to Motiji. He gave me immense support and encouragement in my music career. I am indebted to all my gurus namely Shri Yashwant Joshi, Late Shri Dhruv Ghosh and present singer composer and music director Shri Mohinderjit.



In Mumbai I sang regularly on Radio, Television and on stage performances. I sang many jingles and background songs for documentary films. In the last 3 decades my creative abilities took up the challenge of music direction.



Rita Kaul with her husband Mr. Moti Kaul and sons Sumit & Suhail

'Azadak Ka Insaaf' was one of the musical plays where I assisted the music director. This play was performed at different places in India.

In the year 1995 on our holiday trip to London, Washington and Canada, I had the pleasure to perform before my Kashmiri brethren. These were also the trying times when our entire race was thrown out of the valley. In the early days of this crisis, with a lot of anguish in my heart, I sang all the exodus songs to an exclusively Kashmiri and Indian audience living abroad. The songs were my very own composition and evoked fervour of patriotism.

In Mumbai I concentrated on teaching and grooming children in music, including my two sons Sumit and Sohail. I worked as the head of the department of music section in a well known school, Utpal Shanghvi Institute. During my stint with them, I was instrumental in conducting Annual Day functions with great success. Recently I composed and conducted a Qawwali for them, on their 25th Silver Jubilee.

In 1991, I suffered a personal tragedy. I lost my brother Vinod in an accident, an untimely death that completely shattered my



world. It took me a while to recover from this shock. In the memory of my dearest brother Vinod, I set up an institution, Vinod Sur Shringaar, my very own music academy, established in the year 1996.



Vinod Sur Shringaar has been imparting extensive training and performance exposure to hundreds of students. The institute also prepares the students for diploma courses. In the dance ballet Ramayana I was lucky to have conducted the complete music. This dance ballet was held by Sur Jhankar Dance Academy. I have always been passionate about music and training children in music has always been my ultimate goal in life. I most humbly mention about Armaan Malik, a true star in the present music world who has also had his training with me at Vinod Sur Shringaar. Armaan is forever in praise of this institute and his Guru.

It has been a long journey and I believe my life is a blessed one. I have chosen a field that has brought me close to my spiritual self. Music has drawn me close to God and has had a tremendous and extremely significant

effect on my life. Music as we all know has no language and has healing powers. I always try to instill these factors in the minds of my much loved students. Having been given this divine gift, I try to stir the souls of my students and create a unified melody of oneness. I pray to the Almighty that he gives me the strength and goodwill to transform human lives in this manner to the very end of my days.



(Contd on next page)



Vinod Sur Shringaar



TV grab of the VSS girls (all non-Kashmiri) singing Kashmiri Folk songs at Bhaktivedanta on 28 December 2015.



With Armaan Malik

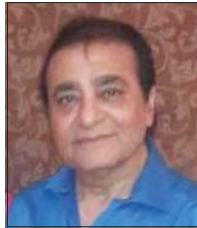


What others say about Rita Kaul:

S.P.Kachru : Ex President, KPA Mumbai

Mrs. Reeta Kaul : Recollecting & Reviving Kashmiri Music

Simply addressing Reeta ji as a gifted composer, dedicated musicologist, distinguished performing artist etc. may only serve as appendages to her comprehensive persona of an elitist GURU, bearing mellifluous voice & masterly grace. Her outstanding contribution through Guru Shishya parampara, in pursuance & propagation of Indian classical as also Kashmiri music, has thrown up an impressive bevy of celebrated vocal artists, who have trained under her creative tutelage over last decades.



Reetaji's engaging bond with Kashmiri Music and overwhelming creative urge to preserve Kashmiri music and melody has yielded her mentorship, undertaking painstaking efforts, in grooming and training young boys and girls to learn & then perform impressively at Kashmiri Musical events. At Vinod Sur Shringaar Academy, It is gratifying to observe Reetaji patiently inspiring & motivating the students with ascent & descent of notes, elaborating & improvising notes of the melody for the upcoming ZaanFest-II event, due for performance on 25th August, 2018 at Sharda Sadan, Kharghar.

We feel extremely indebted to Reeta ji for once again volunteering to train the current batch of our amateur performers and thank her immensely for the favour of her kind indulgence.



Give Zaan a Big Hand

What others say about Rita Kaul:

Rajen Kaul : Ex President, KPA Mumbai

Reeta Kaul : An Accomplished Music Guru

Although my wife Renu knew Rita ji from her school & college days in Srinagar, I got to know her closely from 1992 after we shifted to Mumbai from Baroda. Since then we have been close family friends with Rita ji & Moti ji.



Rita ji a PG from J&K University having deep passion for music acquired a Degree in Music as also was coached in classic music by eminent Music Gurus. She has performed as a Radio & TV artiste having orchestrated much acclaimed music & dance performances in India & abroad.

22 years ago she set up her own Music Academy Vinod Sur Shringaar to pursue her passion of teaching young kids music many of who have graduated to become famous singers in Bollywood & elsewhere.

Apart from being an accomplished Music Guru, I have always known her as a very good human being who goes out of way to help & mentor poor & needy young members of our Society.



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Armaan Malik, the famous singer says this about his Music Guru Ritaji Kaul:

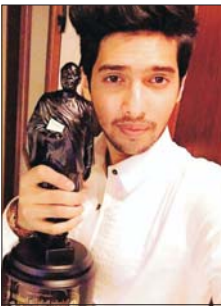


They say - The journey of a thousand miles begins with the very first step. I am glad to say that the first step I took embarking on my musical journey, was at Vinod Sur Shringaar. It has been my

home, my place of prayer and a place where I could get lost in my music. Smt. Rita Kaul, the founding guru of the Vinod Sur Shringaar Academy has been instrumental in developing my early musicality and has hugely contributed in making me the singer I am today. It is not only music that is imparted here but the values that are important in life to become a better human being. I really appreciate your guidance and I am so glad that Rita Ma'am & Vinod Sur Shringaar have been a part of my life.

On winning the prestigious Dadasaheb Phalke Award for the Most Popular Singer of the year 2016:

This year has been a crazy journey for me and every award that I have received has been incentive to work even harder and better. It feels



surreal to know that people out there know me, know my songs and give me so much love. Would like to dedicate this award specially to my musical gurus and teachers Rita Kaul & Zahir Mustafa.



Dr. Pran Nath Kaul being felicitated by his daughter Rita Kaul at a function in 2006 where Shri Khayyam Ji was chief guest. Apart from being a medical doctor, Kaul Sahib was also a well known theatre artist.



With Santoor Maestro Bhajan Sopori



Smt. Aruna Kaul, mother of Rita Kaul being felicitated by Smita Thackerayji at a function in 2005. Smita was the chief guest.

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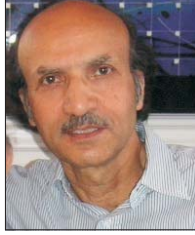


What others say about Rita Kaul:

Dr. K.L.Chowdhury:

Rita Kaul - The Unpretentious Songstress

My first day as a doctor began with the outpatients at SMHS hospital, Srinagar. There was a large working table with three chairs on the three sides for doctors. Sitting in the middle was a lean, slightly older ebullient person with a boyish face and a sharp voice, a lush black growth on his head rather standing out. I introduced myself. He gave me a wide welcoming smile, shook my hands warmly, and offered me a chair. Patients started pouring in. I was a bit nervous so I watched him for a while for I had no idea of the protocol. But he made it easy for me as he got down to work, chatting with patients, bonding with them, cutting jokes and recounting interesting anecdotes. He guided me through that first day and that was enough to set me on course.



The doctor was Pran Nath Kaul, an eye specialist, who was as much at ease with the eyes as with the psyche of his patients. Needless to say that we became friends and continued to remain in touch even after he retired from service until exile threw us into far away climes and sundered human relationships.

But exile has its blessings too. It threw up new acquaintances, gave new friends and opened the doors for new opportunities beyond the pale of my profession. That is how I met another amazing person, who is not just a friend but like a younger brother. Name- Moti Kaul. Who doesn't know him in the KP Diaspora?

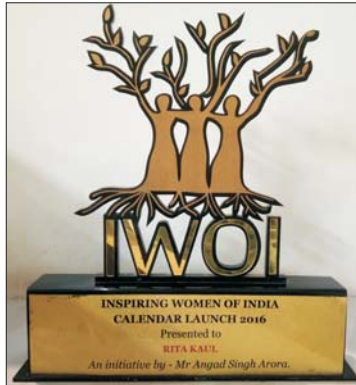
I have never been a great connoisseur of Kashmiri music,

but back in the valley, I would listen to Kashmiri songs by accident, so to speak, when switching on the TV; there used to be only one channel. I was familiar with the names of established singers, but then a new voice floated into our ears – a lilting voice that was unique, a style of singing that was original, and a selection of songs that was sublime. Who was this new star in the musical firmament, I wondered?

The name was Rita Kaul. Soon, I was happy to learn that she was my worthy friend, Dr Pran Nath Kaul's daughter. Her haunting songs continued to pour in from time to time until exile swept us off our easy cushions and we forgot all about songs and music and even forgot what it was to laugh for some time. But art, like exile, has a way of uniting people. And here is the interesting turn in my story in which Rita Kaul completes this triangle of three Kauls, for I came to know that she is not just the worthy daughter of the witty Dr Pran Nath Kaul, but also the life partner of the illustrious Moti Kaul.

But that may not be the best introduction to Rita, for she has a distinct identity of her own, a stronger and abiding one that I discovered only when I met her in person. Strange that Moti Ji never spoke much about his wife. Like her, he is so unostentatious; he doesn't wear the badges of honour on his sleeve, either his own or of his celebrated wife.

I had to wait for a rare chance to know her in person. Moti Ji hardly ever misses to meet me when he visits Jammu. Nearly two years back, for a change, he came along with Rita to see me. Lo, we had a lovely evening together and it was great to know this graceful person, soft-spoken and demure, and so unpretentious that I began to wonder if it was really she that has the seven notes at her





command, that she juggles around in a masterly finesse to create a cadence so distinctly her own. It was only when they left that I searched the web to know more about her creative potential and her accomplishments, the concerts she organized, the dance and drama themes she composed, her performances in India and overseas, her albums and compositions and the awards she has won, especially the Inspiration Award for Women. But it is her greater contribution as a guru for a whole generation of music students whom she mentors at her own academy that fascinated me most. It is not just the legacy of her voice that Rita Kaul is leaving behind for posterity, but her passion for keeping the flame burning.



Rita Kaul comes out as the quintessential KP woman who walks side by side with men, often overtaking them, in the pursuit of excellence. She is truly remarkable.



What others say about Rita Kaul: Neema Bamzai Kher, VP KPA Mumbai Rita Kaul - A Great Human Being

Ritaji is known to me from the time she came to Mumbai after getting married to Mr Moti Kaul. I Knew Motiji personally from the time we were in youth group and he was a VJTI student. We used to have our meetings in the VJTI hostel room. After their

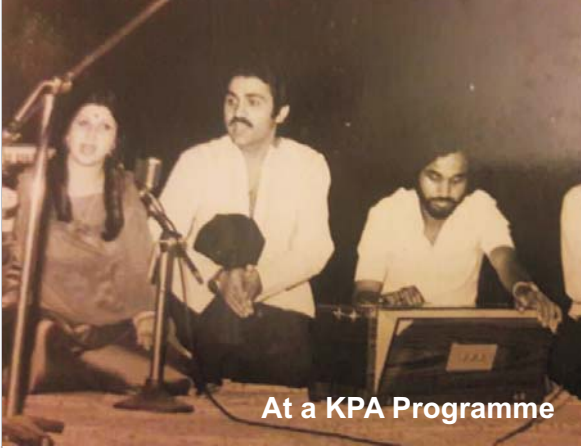


marriage, Motiji and Ritaji shifted to Swami Vivekand Society at Matunga (West). Ritaji was a very good singer and she had taken her degree in music. I got to know her more closely when KPA have had yearly cultural programmes. This was during the years 1976 onwards when Ritaji would take entire responsibility of the programme. Under her management and with total support from Motiji, the programmes used to be greatly successful. Motiji himself was a great lover of music. We the youth group were regulars at their place. Chand, Alok, Ashok, Bhushan, Vimal, Rajni, Bitu, Sunita, myself and many others were in the group. Ritaji would always welcome us with smiling face. I have never ever at that time (and even now) seen her angry or frowning while teaching.

It was a routine for all of us to meet at Ritaji's place for rehearsals on Sundays for two months preceding the cultural



At a KPA Programme with Dipti Naval



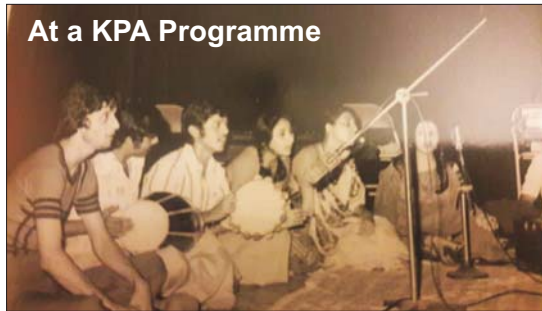
At a KPA Programme

programme dates. It used to be great fun and we used to wait eagerly for these kind of opportunities. Ritaji was very strict in enforcing discipline during our rehearsals and if we ever made a mistake, she would never get angry. We would only make out by seeing her face that she was not satisfied. She would never give up till we were perfect. Ritaji used to serve us tea and lunch during rehearsals which we always relished. There were many boys in the group who used to come from far off places and it would always be a pleasure for Ritaji to serve meals not only to them but to all of us with a smiling face. She was and continues to be a very good cook.

Once it so happened, it was one week before the cultural programme and we were to do final rehearsal. As usual Ritaji was ready with her cooking. She had prepared *roganjosh* on that day, being the final day before the programme. We went for the rehearsal though only ten of us turned up. Towards end of the rehearsals, more people turned up and

we were 25 now. Just before the time of lunch, Ritaji asked us to be busy with our practice and went into the kitchen, seemingly disturbed, because there were 25 to be fed now in place of 10. I realised it and joined her in the kitchen. We cooked some more rice and mixed all rice with the mutton and made it into mutton pulao which turned out to be so delicious. Everybody enjoyed it without getting an inkling of Ritaji's concern. No need to tell here that *Roganjosh-batta* proved to be very lucky as the programme was a big hit.

Music is everything to Ritaji. It is her life. When Sumit was born to her, we had a big party and even on his first birthday we had a big party where all the youth group was present. Kaul's house was an *adda* for us. She has done so many programmes where she has had non-Kashmiri children singing



At a KPA Programme

Kashmiri songs which were always big hits. It may be mentioned here that whenever KPA approached her for doing cultural programmes, she never said 'No'. She was always willing to help, and that is what she is still doing.

Ritaji you are a sweetheart, a great human being. We all love you.



(Contd on next page)



At a KPA Programme



Clockwise from top left:

- 1) Samman Patra from Bhartiya Vikas Sansthan, Mumbai.
- 2) With the then PM Late Smt Indira Gandhi (A rare photograph)
- 3) With legends of the Kashmiri music Raj Begum, Nasim Akhtar, Zoon Begum (A rare photograph again)
- 4) Final Show - 20th Anniversary of Vinod Sur Shringaar
- 5) Rehearsals for 20th Anniversary of Vinod Sur Shringaar
- 6) Some moments of rest

(Contd on next page)



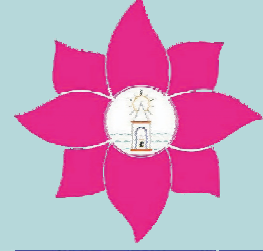
Rita Kaul readying fresh talent for ZaanFest-II at Vinod Sur Shringaar





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Zaaran
FEST

*at Sharda Sadan, Kharghar,
Navi Mumbai
on
25 August 2018*

Report & Glimpses



ZaanFest-II

Report by Lokeshi Pandita , Asst. Editor (Trainee) Praagaash

ZaanFest-II, second in the series of revived Zaan festivals was held at Sharda Sadan, Kharghar on 25 August 2018, first was held at Kashyap Bhawan on 26 May 2018. The purpose of the Zaan festivals is to keep the movement of Zaan alive and to lay focus on our culture and our language which is at the verge of distinction. Shri Bharat Pandit anchored the programme in his own immaculate style.



This ZaanFest have had many interesting events like a talk in Kashmiri; r e c i t i n g story in Kashmiri; Ladi Shah, the traditional folk genre of ballad songs sung by wandering minstrels in Kashmir; young girls and boys trained by Smt. Rita Kaul Ji exclusively for this festival singing Kashmiri Bhajans and songs; open Kashmiri Quiz etc. Programme started at 4.30 PM. It was inaugurated with the traditional lighting of Lamp (Diya) by Smt. Rita Kaul, Shri Moti Kaul (ex President KPA), Shri Sanjay Dhar (President KPA), Smt Asha Wazir and Shri M.K.Raina.

Dr Sanjay Dhar was felicitated and presented a bouquet by Shri S.P.Kachru on the occasion. Dr Dhar spoke about the importance of keeping our language alive and gave stress on continuation of the Zaan movement. He promised full support of the KPA and Mumbai biradari to the Zaan organisers in general and Shri M.K.Raina in particular. This was followed by the felicitation of Smt. Ritaji Kaul who was presented a shawl and a bouquet by Shri M.K.Raina to the standing ovation of the audience. Smt. Kaul spoke for a while and shared her views on preservation of Kashmiri language with the audience and offered all support for anything that benefitted the community.

Next, Mr. Moti Kaul, the renowned social worker and ex President of the KPA was felicitated by Shri S.P.Kachru. Shri Kaul spoke about the Zaan programme and contribution of Shri M.K.Raina in the propagation of Kashmiri language, and about the importance of Sharda Sadan, a great asset created by the Mumbai biradari.

Shri S.P.Kachru gave an introduction of the Zaan movement and its history since its inception in 1998. He laid stress on the need to speak Kashmiri in our homes so that our younger generation picks up the language.

Smt Neena Kher, a member of the Zaan Steering Committee and Vice President of the KPA felicitated Shri Chand Dhar, the celebrated TV and film actor. Shri Dhar also spoke of the necessity to inculcate interest of the Kashmiri language in our youngsters.

Events started with the singing of a Bhajan '*Paadi Kamalan Tal Ba Aayisay*' by all the fresh singers namely Manju Bhat, Shweta Raina, Shalin Pandita, Shehjar Raina (8 years), Karishma Kasid (19 years), Hiya Pandita (8 Years) and Alok Bhat. They all sang very well in presence of their Guru Ritaji, inviting great applause from the audience. They proved that their short duration training had not gone waste. *(Continued on next page)*



Shri M.K.Raina started his class with the explanation regarding 6 Diacritical Marks introduced in the Standardised Devanagari-Kashmiri Script, followed by their usage in Kashmiri words. His lessons were well taken by the audience who remained glued to the blackboard (white here). This was followed by the song '*Harmukh Bartal Aasay*' sung by Manju Bhat and Shehjar Raina. Sanjay Pandita sang the folk song Ladishah specially written by Sunita Raina Pandit for the occasion which was followed by the Leela '*Tsa Deevi Kaastam Me Gam*' sung by Shweta Raina.

An open Zaan Kashmiri Quiz was conducted by Shri M.K.Raina to which there was huge response from the audience. 15 Prizes were given away to those who answered the questions correctly.

'*Rum Gayem Sheeshas*', a famous song originally sung by Raj Begum and Naseem Akhtar at Radio Kashmir, Srinagar was sung here by Shalin Pandita in her melodious voice. This was followed by Sumeet Patwari performing on Guitar with two Kashmiri songs. Not born and not having ever lived in Kashmir, Sumeet does not speak Kashmiri but his interest in learning Kashmiri language is enormous. He has mastered the art of writing text of songs in Devanagari-Kashmiri script and then recite them with almost correct pronunciation.

Lokeshi Pandita (16 years) recited Amar Shaheed Sarwanand Koul Premi's Kashmiri short story '*Suh ta Khargosh*', followed by a talk in Kashmiri by Shri P.K.Kaul. He spoke on Moksha and Lalla Ded's poetry.

Karishma Kasid sang '*Dimayo Dilasa*' in chorus along with other singers. Shalin Pandita and Alok Bhat dramatised Shri M.K.Raina's humorous song '*Dalvanzuv*' to the grand entertainment of the audience.

Programme came to an end with the Prize Distribution ceremony and presentation of gift prizes to the performers on the show. This part of the programme was anchored by Shri Chand Dhar. His presence added grace to the occasion. Champions Trophy in the Spoken Kashmiri category was awarded to Mrs. Manju Kasid of Kharghar and the Runner Up Trophy to Mrs. Vijay Dhar of Colaba. Eighty years old Jaya Kaul of Vadodara bagged the Spoken Kashmiri Motivational Trophy. Jayaji has proved it amply at the Zaan WhatsApp classes that age stands no bar for learning and expanding field of one's knowledge. Ritaji Kaul presented gift prizes to the singers.

In between, Shri Rakesh Roshan Bhat, Shri M.K.Kar, Shri Bharat Pandit and Dr. Sanjay Dhar informed the audience about the forthcoming HARUD show at Rang Sharda, Bandra and emphasised on their participation. Shri Rakesh Roshan Bhat also spoke about the Vomedh Theatre Group of Jammu which is presenting the show.

Sharda Sadan Hall was jam packed. Shri Chand Bhat covered the whole programme with his photographic skills. Members of the Steering Committee of Zaan, especially Annpurna Raina, Renu Pandita, Manju Kasid and Rakesh Watal toiled very hard to make it a grand show.





Glimpses of ZaanFest-II





Glimpses of ZaanFest-II





Glimpses of ZaanFest-II

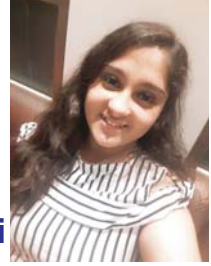




Your Own Page



Painting of
Lokeshi Pandita
(Age 16 Years)
D/o Renu & Sanjay
Pandita
Airoli, Navi Mumbai



Painting of
Avishi Khar
(Age 12 Years)
D/o Meenakshi Khar
Thakur Village,
Kandivli, Mumbai



Painting of
Rishit Kar
(drawn when in
7th Standard)
S/o Deepa &
Vinay Kar &
grandson of
Shri M.K.Kar,
Mulund

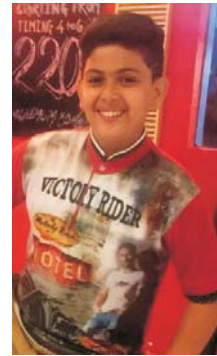




Photo Feature - Rare Photos

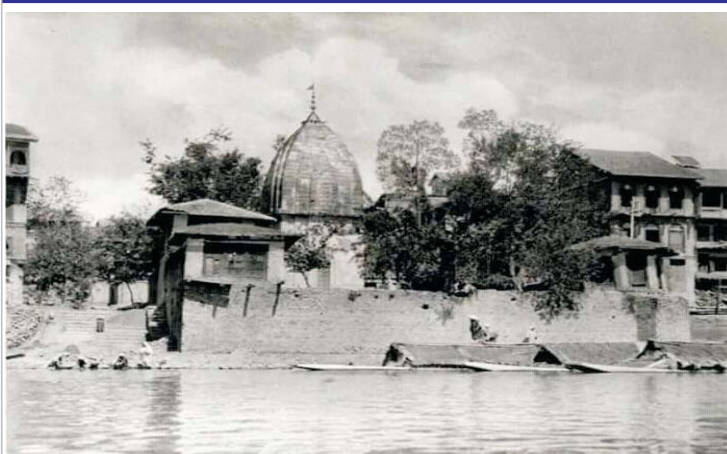


Famous spring Vichar Nag which was an annual place where our community elders deliberated every year.

Vicharnaag Plaque: One NRI couple Mrs. Jaya and Mr. M.K.Razdan have donated to help clean up the area as it has become a marshy land. Spring looked good but inside the temple needed more repairs. It was an emotional experience.

Vicharnag is also said to be the ancestral place of Anupam Kher. His great grandfather belonged to this place.

Photographs and Text: Surinder Tikoo @surintiku



Ganpatyar Mandir - Year 1921

Photograph: Bhushan Lal Bhat @bhushanlalb



KP woman
Year 1922

Photo
Vish Nath
Compasi

Praagaash
Courtesy:

Bhushan
Lal Bhat



Letters to Editor

Namaskar,

I am working on an e-book 'The Saga of Survival' in different style and with different content. I want to express my gratitude to my community members who shared at a very crucial time the pain and anguish of our displaced brethren who left the valley, to uphold the Dharma and honour of our womenfolk. At that critical juncture, when hell was let loose in the valley, we stood like a rock together. I was then President, Kashmiri Samiti, Delhi, the focal point for our struggle for survival. It was a unique experience to find extra ordinary spirit and zeal of our community members to find them all out, in helping mood, when nobody even not the Government took cognizance of our miseries. We condemned the genocide and ethnic cleansing of Kashmiri Hindus. To protest, we came out in thousands on roads and rest is the history!

I am sending you the Chapter I (Saga 1 & Saga 2) for your comments. Please do respond with your comments. Thanks.

C.L.Gadoo

New Delhi
cl.gadoo@gmail.com



Dear Raina Saheb,

I have gone through the write up 'Great People to Remember' just now. I find it best possible summary narration of great personality like Pt Saligram Kaul (my father) in the limited space.

Thanks and God bless you for your sincere efforts!

Kuldeep Kumar Kaul

Bhopal, MP
kuldeepvijay1@gmail.com



Dear Raina Sahib,

Wonderful design, a Prakash to our Kashmiri community what a literature is out by our intellectuals. You have been working since long and it has amazing information. May Saraswati Mata bless you. I am also working in the field of music with whatever capacity is there.

Vijay Bhan

Nerul, Navi Mumbai



Brilliant attempt and effort. It is very easy for people like me to make comments here and there but it takes a solid amount of grit, dedication, determination toil to produce something like this. And Mr. Raina has shown all of that on the ground, not in the air. I sincerely hope and pray the global KP community will support this publication to keep it sustained. Unless supported, the publication will not sustain and we will have no one to blame except ourselves for that.

I do not qualify to comment on the quality of the content and shall leave that to the readers and the experts amongst us.

On the layout and presentation, surely a great job done in absence of professional design help. Some minor points that come to my novice mind are:

- The Pages are text heavy. These days, the attention span of a PDF page is less than seven seconds. Thus the content should be converted to easy to understand graphics than lengthy text.
- The colour combination looks a bit too loud at places and could be more subtle.
- The photo on page 40 is a historical treasure and should be greatly appreciated and





Letters to Editor

credited.

● More as I read through over the month. Once again and before I close, I stand up and salute this brilliant effort.

Ravinder Bhan

Powai, Mumbai

●●●

Your efforts are highly appreciable. The cover page is very well drafted with Zaan Ded and the Vasmath. Read the stories of migration and it brought back those horrid memories.



Anju Watal

Marol, Mumbai

●●●

Namaskar Mahara,

Sorry, I didnt go through the first issue of Praagaash. This one is a journal of class. Nicely arranged articles that cater to diverse category of readers with interesting content to hold attention. Well done Mahara.



For an editor, it is always a challenge to go one step ahead while preparing next edition and maintain same or even better standards. But Raina Saheb has a magical wand to produce a new flick every time. God bless you Sir.

Sunil Ranjan Kaul

Anushakti Nagar, Mumbai

●●●

Respected Sir,

Namaskar. I am a humble member of the community and would like to appreciate you on celebrating Zaan. I also appreciate the way the community members try to come together in spite of their busy schedule.

But there are certain things which I feel I need to share here. I have observed that since our

exodus from Kashmir the community members have been involved in lot of activites in different cities to bring the members of the community together. But I think that in spite of being a community of great thinkers, we have not done anything constructive for the betterment of our community. I am not an atheist but I think instead of limiting ourselves to celebrating Hawans and other such celebrations, why nobody in our community did ever think of coming together to establish educational institutions wherein our children can get quality education as well as jobs. If you will see most of the communities like Catholics, Parsis, Jains have their own colleges. Raising funds would be difficult but not impossible.....

Other than that, I feel since we are spread in different cities of the country, (we) should fight for domicile exemption so that our children can opt for courses other than Engineering.

Sanjogta Koul

sanjogtakoul@yahoo.in

●●●

Dear Raina Sahib,

Congrats on the second issue of great and robust Praagaash. Your captainship is bringing glory to the magazine. I am impressed by your innovative columns, journalism in graceful attire. The magazine is wedded to Kashmiri culture of which most of us KPs are ignorant. You are making laudable effort and we are all with you. Congrats once again.



Prof. Ashok Aima

Borivli, Mumbai

●●●

Namaskar,

As an activist, I not only appreciate your contribution but also value all what you do for community's preservation of culture, language



Letters to Editor

and literature, which is not everybody's cup of tea. Your yoeman's services are to be written in golden words. In a cosmopolitan city of Mumbai, these type of activities are highly desirable to let our progeny be aware of our strength. We may at times be dejected but we have to continue our efforts. Nishkam seva never goes unrewarded.



Rajinder Premi

New Delhi.



Dear Maharaj Krishen,

Thanks for the August 2018 issue of Pragaash that arrived a day ahead of schedule. I wish we all were to emulate your promptness.



Once again this issue has all that you have promised – poetry, paintings, stories, history, archives, personalities, letters and other write-ups.

I am glad there is another write-up on *The Story of my House* by Sh Kamal Hak I hope there will be more in the future issues of Pragaash. My idea of collecting these stories is to make the houses talk our stories; present a slice of our lives, a glimpse into what our life was like in Kashmir. More importantly, I would like a description of what happened to the houses after we were forced into exodus. We know, by the end of 1990 alone around 2500 houses were gutted, mostly belonging to our community. Others were illegally occupied, vandalized, looted, or bought for a song. In these transactions, there was a sinister conspiracy at work between the militants, the buyers and the municipal/revenue officials. The taking over of whole KP *mohallas* (neighborhoods) in several towns and villages, ostensibly for the widening of roads, or for creating space for bus stands, parks, public

playgrounds, etc. is one example of state-sponsored annexation of our properties. Collectively these stories will go down as another major document about the ethnic cleansing that we have suffered and still do. The blasting of Bamiyan Buddhas in Afghanistan created international outrage, but there are scores of our own historic Shivas (temples) under attack in Kashmir, and yet no one seems to care. For more than a decade, we have been crusading for a Temple and Shrines Bill for the protection and preservation of our religious institutions (we have documented more than 400) but we have met strong opposition not just from our known adversaries but even from those within the Hindu fold.

I know there are some of our friends out there who laugh at what seems to them a futile exercise, even to reminisce on the past. They ask us to move on, and forget about what was and is now practically lost for ever. But in the journey of life, one needs to pause at times to look back at the road traveled, in order to carve the path ahead.

A word about the cover page of Pragaash. While the picture of Zaan Ded is striking, I wonder why she is not wearing the traditional gear – the pheran, taranga and pooch (headgear), cummerbund (lungi) and the footwear (khraw).

Before I forget, I loved reading Antarmukh, the Hindi poem on introspection/reflection by Shri T N Dhar (Kundan), as also his Kashmiri essay *Pevan Chum Yaad*, which recreated the times of the all-time greats of Kashmiri poetry with whom he had the good fortune for poetic deliberations.

Cheers,

K.L.Chowdhury

kundanleela@yahoo.com





Dear Raina Sahib,

Hand folded Namaskar. Nice and soothing to know about Praagaash. Please accept my congratulations for the welcome return.

Writing for the magazine would be my privilege. Regards,

B.N.Betab

Jammu



Dear Editor,

This is in continuation to my write-up 'Preservation and Survival' under your column Mission Survival. Culture is a multifaceted vehicle of life and living. One can be ill-cultured but civilized. On the contrary, one can be cultured but uncivilized. Some aspects of culture are determined by weather, terrain, attire, cuisine of the place/region one belongs to. Regional shift will naturally warrant a shift in attire, cuisine etc. Let us look at 'pheran' and 'kangri' that are essential in Kashmir region. One cannot wear such attire nor make use of a brazier in the plains. Therefore such items as become inessential in a new setting ought to be buried happily. Let us learn from our recent History that we have adopted the western attire in toto. In the 30s of the last century, Hindu women in Kashmir were persuaded to switch over to wearing Saree. The education of little girls was taken up very enthusiastically. One cannot go against such progressive reforms. Change is integral to life. Let there be light, knowledge and sincerity aplenty all around.

Prof. Rajnath Bhat

BHU Varanasi



Editor's Note

Views expressed in the signed articles

are not necessarily those of

Zaan

or

Praagaash.

We invite writers to write for Praagaash. Write ups can be in Kashmiri, Hindi or English on subjects related to Kashmir, Kashmiris and Kashmiri language.

Write ups on subjects of common interest, Humour, Science, Medical Science, Health, achievements by our Children, Young & Old are also welcome.

Articles can be e-mailed to

projectzaan@gmail.com

While e-mailing articles in Hindi/Kashmiri, kindly attach the font used.



Kashmiri Pandits' Association, Mumbai

Presents

HARUD

The Cultural Extravaganza
Celebrating KP culture and resurgence

8th Sept., Saturday, 6 PM
Rang Sharda Auditorium, Bandra (west), Mumbai

Key Highlights

- Vomedh Theatre Group's acclaimed Hindi play 'Ek Aur Birbal' based on Legendary Pt. Birbal Dhar's revolutionary life episode that was instrumental in integrating Kashmir with India
- Live Kashmiri musical performance
- 'Does India need a dictator?' - Book release of Australia based KP writer Sh. Bill Koul

Donor passes of Rs. 1000, Rs. 500 & Rs. 300 to be available soon through online as well as offline mode. Seat allotment would be purely on first come first serve basis

For Sponsorships & Donor Passes contact
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Vomedh Theatre Group's
acclaimed Hindi play

Ek Aur Birbal
(Based on Legendary Pt. Birbal Dhar)

Live Kashmiri Music

Book Release of
Australia based KP Writer

Shri Bill Koul

at

**Rang Sharda
Bandra (W), Mumbai**

Donor Passes of :

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Contact:

Ashish 9619028006
Rajesh 9819339114

HARUD

About KPA, Mumbai

Established in 1968, Kashmiri Pandits' Association, Mumbai is a non-profit community association dedicated to enriching lives of people, especially the Kashmiri community. The main objective of Kashmiri Pandits' Association, Mumbai (KPA) is the preservation, propagation, promotion of Kashmiri culture and social values. KPA, over the years has enriched the society through awareness programs, educational initiatives, rehabilitation of destitute and ethnically displaced families, providing medical help and encouraging the younger generations to conserve Kashmiri heritage.

About Vomedh

Vomedh is a Jammu based registered Theatre and Cultural group founded by Kashmiri Pandit brothers Rohit Bhat and Rakesh Roshan Bhat. It has emerged as the largest theatre group of KPs. Vomedh is dedicated to preservation of heritage, culture and values of Indian society and in particular of Kashmiri Pandits, through meaningful and responsible theatre. Vomedh's key Kashmiri productions are Chopayer Yee Gash, Gadd Bateh, Rovmut Batta. Hindi productions include Ek Aur Birbal, Ateet Ke Sakshi, Khoya Bachpan and Mujrim Main Nahi

About the book - 'Does India need a dictator?' & author Bill Koul

The author believes a significant transformation in the political infrastructure is necessary to address issues of increasing population, corruption, poor education, poverty etc. for which an authoritarian government, headed by a benevolent dictator, is necessary for at least one generation. Kashmir has a special coverage in this book. The author believes a peaceful Kashmir is vital for India's good health and integrity.

Bill is an engineering consultant, writer and editor. This book is a sequel to his earlier book, Issues White-Anteing India. He has also written two other books - Twenty-Two Years, a memoir of his earlier life in Kashmir, and My life does not have to be happy, a book on well-being. Bill is a Kashmiri Pandit. He left Kashmir in December 1989. As an Australian citizen, he resides in Perth, Western Australia.