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Mouth-watering Peaches - A Taste of Kashmir

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Editorial - M.K.Raina

Ah! Kachroo Sahib



The Editorial Board, 'Milchar' announces with deep regret, the sad demise of its seniormost member Shri J.N.Kachroo on 14th September 2006 at Mumbai. Shri Kachroo Sahib's departure from the scene has been a great loss to the Mumbai biradari in general and the Kashmiri Pandits' Association in particular.

Shri Kachroo Sahib got associated with 'Milchar' in the year 2001, when its Editorial Board was re-constituted to bring in professionalism in its publication. Apart from the valuable guidance he provided to the Board, Kachroo Sahib initiated the column 'From the Pages of Histrory' in 'Milchar' in January 2001 and continued it till August 2005 when he could not concentrate much on writing due to his ill-health. His contribution to refurbish the journal has been enormous. The vacuum created by his departure as far as 'Milchar' is concerned, can not be filled for a long time to come.

Apart from his contribution to Milchar, Shri Kachroo Sahib was instrumental in launching the Project Zaan, a Kashmiri literary platform in the year 2000 in Mumbai. It was actually in late 1998 that some enthusias-

tic members of Lalla Ded Educational and Welfare Trust, under the inspiring guidance of Shri Kachroo Sahib, conceived the idea of organising some sort of 'Story-telling' or 'Quiz Contest'

in Kashmiri language to inculcate interest in our youngsters in their mother-tongue. Initially, one page hand-outs were released along with the Milchar, giving tit-bit information about our culture, language, birth place etc. to our youngsters. These hand-outs created interest not only in our young generation, but also in the senior members of the community. It was here when Shri Kachroo Sahib and his team discussed the blue print of the project with Kashmiri Pandits' Association for the larger interest of the community, and KPA decided to give logistic support to this laudable effort. Consequently, on 30th April, 2000, Project Zaan was re-launched as a joint project of Lalla Ded Educa-



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tional & Welfare Trust and the Kashmiri Pandits' Association, Mumbai.

The periodical 'Hand-outs' ultimately gave way to the 'Information Digest Series', of which 5 volumes have been published till date. This also includes the publication of 'Basic Reader for Kashmiri Language', the first of its

glory to our future generation and those that follow them.

There are many communities in our own country that have suffered the trauma of displacement but they ensure that their kids learn the mother tongue at home. Can we emulate their example? Instances are many, but I bring forward just two: Bengalis who had to run away from what is now Bangladesh and Sindhis who fled Sindh in Pakistan. Bengalis are scattered in various states, so are Sindhis yet they speak their respective mother tongues at home. There are many other communities that deserve to be emulated in this respect. Instances are : Malayalis, Tamils, Punjabis, Gujaratis to name a few.

I was amazed to find that just four Gujarati families in Asmara, North East Africa had successfully preserved their mother tongue after nearly a hundred years of migration there! And their kids spoke chaste Hindi too just because, as they put it, they were amply exposed to Hindi Films right through their childhood and youth. The families sought brides for their sons and grooms for their daughters from Gujarat. There was not a single case of inter-community marriage reported.

May our renewed quest for preservation of our culture, identity and heritage make it happen across the country and abroad so that our progeny does not suffer the pangs of a lack of identity, as do many communities in several countries across Europe and the Americas.

**Love Kashmiri, Learn Kashmiri!
Be a rightful heir to your legacy and history and culture!**

Matrimonial

❖ Wanted suitable KP alliance for a slightly Manglik, good looking, smart girl, 5'-5", 10 August 1976 born, M.A. (Economics), B.Ed. (Jammu University), working as Lecturer in Degree College, Mumbai. Correspond with Tekni/Kolawali to Mr. Raina, Mumbai. Tel: (Res.) 022-65716118. Mob: 09223230640. E-mail: amitraina007@gmail.com

❖ Suitable alliance is invited for my son, born November 1977, height 5'-3", B.E. Electronics, working as Senior Engineer in MNC and posted at Mumbai. Please contact Mrs. Susheela Kachroo, C/o Shri S.K.Garyali, Flat No. 701, Bldg. No. 38, NRI Complex, Seawood Estates, Nerul, Navi Mumbai 400706. Tel: 39220056.

26 January 1997

... Dr. K.L.Chowdhury ...

You amaze me, my country
that not only you grant immunity
to a dreaded *Ghazi*
who spawned the insurgency,
conspired and took up arms against you,
looted, burned and raped
and gunned down innocent denizens,
with impunity -
but also accord him the privilege
and the highest honour
to take the salute today,
in the Republic Day parade
right in this borough here,
so near to where
his victims shiver
in the refugee tents. □□

brother who was growing weak under the burden of age and prevailing circumstances caused by his adherence to old values and respect for the employer. Kashmiri language is remarkable for its treasures of quality proverbs and idioms which, at times, convey differently than what they literally mean. Mr. Raina has very commendably chosen many such proverbs which the younger brother is making use of in turning the tables in confronting his master by following the literal meaning of the proverbs. The whole drama thus provides a humorous, interesting and literary piece of literature.

The second story, 'Vath' is focusing on a social situation, faced by Kashmiri Pandits, due to their being discriminated for jobs leading to their migration beyond the limits of the state, in search of bread and butter and subsequently by internal displacement after the onset of terrorism in the state, which caused their large scale exodus from the valley in 1990. The story describes the pains of this migration and displacement and reveals the values of 'relationship', which prove mostly superficial at the moments of trials and tribulations. Even amongst the brothers, sharing the accommodation which a migrant brother had created at Delhi becomes unpleasant causing crafty set back to his brother who was displaced, lock stock and barrel by exodus. Though the sister-in-laws had very sympathetic relationship among themselves, the relations grew sour, as generally happens under such situations, between haves and have nots. In the process the parents suffer and die a sad death and the younger

brother has no alternative other than returning to Jammu for his survival. With better conditions he works hard, does well and succeeds in having his own residence. On the inauguration day, he invites the elder brother's family who visit them with an ulterior motive. However, the brotherly relation reveals, blood is thicker than water and the strained relations get once again corrected with changed circumstances. The story ends on an optimistic note when the elder brother wills his Delhi property amongst the two sons, one his own and the other that of his brother. The whole is a brilliant plot of events and details, revealing the pains, migration and exodus of Kashmiri Pandits, has caused in their real lives.

The third story 'Tabdeeli' is revealing a fascinating drama caused by the transfer, (Tabdeeli) of a dedicated officer in Kashmiri ambience, who had risen from a mechanic to a Head Clerk over thirty seven years of his service. By dint of his dedicated services, attachment of affection and love for his colleagues and moral integrity, he created a niche for himself in the office. As used to happen, this long service had made him possessive of his job and was, therefore, very much upset with the transfer order, a new boss had allowed to take place. As his all efforts to reverse this order, appeared to have not proved purposeful, the dedicated officer gathers courage to accept the reality and prepare himself to face the challenge caused by the transfer. The story reveals the clash of egos and such sensitivities very delicately. He visits the office in another town of Kashmir, in preparation of his move,

Terror Scenario - Dr. Shibhen Krishen Raina

TERRORISM IN KASHMIR: ORIGIN & GROWTH

Broadly speaking, when justice and right are denied to a person over a longer period of time, the person is left with two options: bear the situation patiently, or the reaction is anguish, and that reaction, in the process culminates into terrorism. Besides other things, spreading of communal hatred, religious frenzy, separatist tendency etc. are the tools which terrorists generally use. Guns too are used to achieve the so-called specified mission. Fanaticism, extremism, radicalism, separatism, militancy, activism etc. are its other names or manifestations. This is one side of the picture of terrorism (terrorists fighting

people. Needless to mention here that acts of terror are carried out by people who are indoctrinated to the extent of following a strategy of dying to kill. They are the ones who have become pawns in the hands of their masters who direct their paths, sitting in the comforts of far off places with all the facilities available to them. Masters have their vested political interests while as pawns seemingly have nothing to gain except suffer for a cause about which they themselves don't know or know very little.



Terrorism in Kashmir is almost 18

Modern terrorism has resorted to other option of intimidation, i.e. influence the mass media, in an effort to amplify and broadcast feelings of intense fear and anger among the people.

for a genuine cause i.e. liberating themselves, their society/country from the oppressor/ perpetrator). Another side of the picture is disgusting and questionable. Over the years terrorism has emerged as a systematic use or threatened use of violence to intimidate a population, community or government and thereby effect political, religious or ideological change just to achieve personal gains. Modern terrorism has resorted to other option of intimidation, i.e. influence the mass media, in an effort to amplify and broadcast feelings of intense fear and anger among the

years old now and has likeness to the second side of the picture. It has a history long enough to be traced from the date when partition was forced resulting in the emergence of two nations, India and Pakistan, after the sub-continent freed itself from the colonial rule of the British Empire. It may not be out of context here to probe into the consequences in detail that gave rise to terrorism in Kashmir. But again, before that, giving a brief introduction of this widely known beautiful valley would be too apt.

Kashmir - Paradise on Earth (Switzerland of Asia), Nature's grand

finale of beauty is a masterpiece of earth's creation of charm and loveliness. Famous for its beauty and natural scenery throughout the world and for its high snow-clad mountains, scenic spots, beautiful valleys, rivers with ice-cold water, attractive lakes and springs and ever-green fields, dense forests and beautiful health resorts, enhance its grandeur and are a source of great attraction for tourists. It is also widely known for its different kinds of agricultural products, fruit, vegetables, saffron, herbs, and minerals, precious stones handicrafts like woollen carpets, shawls and finest kind of embroidery on clothes. During summer, one can enjoy the beauty of nature, trout fishing, big and small game hunting etc.; during winter climbing mountain peaks and sports like skating and skiing on snow slopes are commonly enjoyed. In addition to the above, Pilgrimage to famous religious shrines of the Hindus and the Muslims make Kashmir a great tourist attraction. About Kashmir Sheikh Sadie a great Persian poet is believed to have said, "If there is any heaven on earth, it is here in Kashmir, in Kashmir in Kashmir only."

Apart from natural beauty, Jammu and Kashmir has a unique cultural blend which makes it different from the rest of the country (India). It is not only distinct in cultural forms and heritage, but in geographical, demographical, ethnical, social entities, forming a distinct spectrum of diversity. The people of Kashmir, Jammu and Ladakh, all follow diverse religion, language and culture, but continuously intermingling which symbolizes Indian Unity amidst

Diversity. Its different cultural forms like art and architecture, fair and festivals, rites and rituals, seers and sages, languages and literatures, embedded in ageless period of history, speak of endless unity and diversity with unparalleled cultural cohesion and amicability. Kashmir has been a great centre of learning. A treasure of

Kashmir has been a great centre of learning. A treasure of rich Sanskrit literature is to be found here. Early Indo - Aryan civilization has originated and flourished in this land.

rich Sanskrit literature is to be found here. Early Indo-Aryan civilization has originated and flourished in this land. It has also been embracing point of advent of Islam bringing its traditions of Persian civilization, tolerance, brotherhood and sacrifice.

After the British withdrew from the Indian subcontinent in 1947 and India and Pakistan emerged as two separate countries, princely states were given an option to choose the country they wanted to stay on. Obviously, the states falling geographically within had no other option but to merge with the country they were situated. Border states like Kashmir, Jodhpur etc. took time to come out with their firm decisions probably because they wanted to enjoy

Remembering our Roots - Arjan Dev Majboor

Some Famous Tirthas of Kupwara & Handwara

Kashmir has remained a cradle of Teerthas. Being surrounded by small and big mountain ranges, lush green forests and meadows full of flowers, attraction towards spiritualism has remained throughout its history. According to Abul Fazal there were seven hundred Teerthas at that time in Kashmir. Neelmata gives the details of hundreds of Vaishnava Teerthas situated in

place in the olden times. It was still a place of KP devotees. This Teertha has been mentioned in some histories on Kashmir.

Zurhom : 'hom' is the word derived from Ashram. Ashrams were constructed for saints and learned scholars so that they could carry on the meditation and



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Kashmir.

The Kashmir Mahaatmeyas—written by renowned scholar Sh. Anant Ram Shastri has collected Sanskrit Mahatmeys written in praise of various famous Teerthas. It is a great service to the scholar of Kashmir. Mahatmeys not only praise the Deities, but also give a full detail of the place and its importance.

In this article I am going to give brief details of some Teerthas surrounding Kupwara and Handwara of North Kashmir. I have not been able to see these places personally, but have collected information from some migrant K.P's of this area.

Zolur : This place is about nine kilometers from Sopore. It seems that it might have remained a Buddhist

creative work at ease, away from the hustle and bustle of towns and cities. Zurhom (Kupwara) is a famous Teertha which was the last station to reach the world famous teertha of 'Sharda' which is under the control of Pakistan now. From Zurhama about six hours journey on foot comes Sharda (Sharda—Desa of Kashmir).

During recent excavations made at Zurhama by the state Archaeology Department, important statues have been found. These are: 1) Bhagwan Vishnu riding on 'Garuda'. 2) Meditative Budha in 'Mudra' and 3) Yakhsha Mukh Shiva (a very interesting find). There was a Devi Mandir also, where devotees used to come. Finds of sculptures of Vishnu, Shiva and Budha show the tolerances

Shaikh-ul-Islam. In order to assert his religious authority, he asked the Deputy Governor, Mir Ahmed Khan, to start a campaign of persecution of the Kafirs (infidels) - as the Kashmiri Pandits were called. In order to satisfy his satanic ego, the Mulla issued six commandments:

1. No Hindu should ride a horse, nor should a Hindu wear a shoe;
2. That they should not wear Jama (Mughal costume);
3. That they should move bare arms;
4. That they should not visit any garden;
5. That they should not have tilak mark on their foreheads;
6. That their children should not receive any education.

But Ahmed Khan refused to execute the mischievous decree. The Mullah then excited his followers against the Kashmiri Pandits. He established his seat in a mosque, assumed the duties of the administrator under the title of Dindar Khan and let loose the reign of terror. The Hindus were wickedly tormented, their houses burnt and property looted. Hundreds of Brahmans were killed, prostrated, maimed and humiliated. They began to run away in large numbers and hide

the most horrific and terrible conditions generated by the Mullah and his gang. But soon he was assassinated by his rivals and his son, Sharif-ud-Din, become the new Shaikhul-Islam. The son improved upon the brutal methods of his father and inflicted most barbaric, cruel and inhuman tortures upon the vulnerable Brahmans. The plight of the Kashmiri Pandits during this period became tremendously miserable and tragic.

The Afghan rule in Kashmir (AD 1753-1819) was a period of cruelty, homicide and anarchy. W.R. Lawrence calls it the "reign of brutal tyranny." The barbarous Afghans employed every wild, inhuman, primitive, ferocious, cruel and brutal method to suppress the Kashmiri Brahmans. A pitcher filled with ordure was placed on the head of a Pandit and stones were pelt on it, till it broke and the unfortunate Brahman become wet with filth. Their brutality and atrocity crossed the extreme limits when Hindus were tied up in grass sacks, two and two, and drowned in the Dal Lake.

The victimized Hindu were forced to flee the country or were killed or converted to Islam. There was horrible mass exodus of the Kashmiri Pandits,

Their (Afghans') brutality and atrocity crossed the extreme limits when Hindus were tied up in grass sacks, two and two, and drowned in the Dal Lake.

themselves in mountainous terrain. This was the fifth dreadful mass exodus of the legendary Kashmiri Pandits from their mystic motherland. Those who remained behind lived in

sixth one, to far away places like Delhi, Allahabad, etc. Many covered the long distances on foot.

(To be continued)

