

Lecture Series
Challenges before Indian Society

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पुस्तक माला

8

Reflections on Kashmir

Prof. Rattan Lal Hangloo



Govind Ballabh Pant Social Science Institute, Prayagraj

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Prof. Rattan Lal Hangloo, the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Allahabad, is a specialist on Kashmir, Indian and Central Asia History, Religion, Politics and Culture. A Polyglot and a celebrated academician, the former VC of Kalyani University, West Bengal, he was a member of Academic Council of the United Nations System, at Yale University, USA, for two years, for Asia and Africa and has headed the Chair of Indian Studies at Tbilisi University Georgia. He also headed the Chair of Indian Studies at University of West Indies, Trinidad and Tobago. A visiting professor at various international and national universities, he has published over 100 papers in national and international journals and more than half a dozen books. He has recently authored History of Science and Technology in India: Exploring new themes (Rawat Publishers, Delhi) and Indian Diaspora in Caribbean (Primus Publishers, Delhi 2012). He has been honoured with various prestigious fellowships and awards for his academic excellence.

8 July, 2019

GBPSSI Auditorium

Let me, first of all, tell you that for the past quite some time, we have been observing that this institute, G.B.Pant Social Science Institute, has been doing wonderful work under the directorship of Professor Badri Narayan Ji. It is really developing as a great centre of ideas not only in Uttar Pradesh but in country as well. A series of Seminars, discussions and special lectures are regularly held here, in these academic activities, experts in different academic disciplines, social scientists and activists are invited regularly. Besides, the institute also has some very eminent faculty members who are seriously engaged in various issues which concern our Indian society. In fact, such issues may not be visible to liberally educated urban population but intellectuals in academia and society are able to visualise them very vividly.

I sometimes forget to thank people, therefore, let me at the outset thank Professor Badri Narayan ji, his colleagues and all of you for giving me an opportunity to discuss the Kashmir issue here today. This is not for the first time that the history of Kashmir problem is being discussed in our university, we had a discussion earlier also, in our political science department,

some months back, in which some of the professors present here also participated. I had talked about the chronological sequence of events that took place in Kashmir since ancient times in that meet. Some part of that discussion will be repeated here but you will find some new perspectives in this lecture as well. After that meeting, I started writing a book on Kashmir which is now complete and has been sent for publication. Once I completed the book, some new ideas started striking my mind and I realised that Kashmir can be studied further with freshness of perspective.

All discussions on Kashmir have some basic contextual problems. First of all, many among the audience from outside Kashmir are generally not very well aware of the long history and traditions of Kashmir although they claim . This problem was quite serious till 1990. I observed that whenever we introduced ourselves to others some times in rest of India that I am from Kashmir, they would immediately begin to refer to places which are part of Jammu but not Kashmir. They reflected their knowledge about Kashmir was limited, obviously that would impact their understanding of Kashmir. People outside Kashmir also did not know much about the politics of the place, its culture, and other allied social issues that people of Kashmir are engaged with day in and day out. Then, I realised that it would be better if people are made aware of these issues first. Here, it is worth mentioning that if we take cognizance of the popular discourse, we find that some people do not read the books written by the intellectuals and scholars on the subject. Further, a lot of literature produced on Kashmir in recent past is also available. But there is some literature which is absolutely trash because it does not reflect a deeper understanding of the issues concerned and is ridden with loyalty to prejudice. Anyway, when we looked at this problem of unawareness complicated by misinformation, we decided to spread the awareness about Kashmir issue to larger public through lectures. Professor Badri Narayan took the problem very seriously and

immediately suggested the title for this lecture as “Reflections on Kashmir”.

The foremost problem one faces while developing an authentic discourse on Kashmir is that there are a plethora of perceptions mostly imposed ones, preoccupying people's mind. What the researchers do in the case of Kashmir is that they pick up only those pieces of information that are relevant to their pre-conceived notions. Another way of their approach is that they first collect information and then they try to formulate hypotheses. In both the aforesaid approaches, massive filtration of information takes place taking researcher far away from facts. Yet another oft-used approach is based on disjoint pieces of evidences, not organised in a chronological order, in which the authors make mess of the arguments when they try to add up those pieces of information .As a result the unawareness about this problem or misinformation is bound to remain in public domain.

Let me explain it a little elaborately. When we talk of Kashmir, we generally pick up 1947, we pick up Pakistan, then 1953, Sheikh Abdullah and then, we start debating whether the problem actually cropped up in 1947 or 1953. We conveniently ignore the ancient, elaborate, eminent background of the region under discussion. It is a well established fact that different regions in India had their own ancient dynasties; whether you talk about central India, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar or Bengal, every region had its own regional political specifications. Accordingly, Kashmir also has had its own history and problems. It had its own culture which simply did not evolve out of its internal forces but by interacting with various regions which were external to Kashmir's culture and civilization. People migrating from central Asia and settling down to this region whose climate suited them, gradually became part of the indigenous Kashmiri culture by incorporating their share of culture and traditions into the local culture and traditions. This early

culture had a Sanskrit language as the base. Even as people continued to migrate to this regional centre with their language, ideas and institutions, religion, philosophies, material culture, rationalism, idealism, and many other things, this development further enriched and strengthened the local Kashmiri culture that assumed dominant form. Hence, in ancient times, Kashmir emerges as one of the top most elite centres of the world in terms of Sanskrit and philosophy.

But what happens to this centre later on? Look at the politicians today when they talk of *Kashmiriyat*, for example¹. They refer to harmony across religious lines because the state never appreciate disharmony that shakes the social basis of power. That alone is not *Kashmiriyat*. Similarly when some peace is disturbed in Indian mainland because of community conflicts we bring in the concept of '*Ganga-Jamuni*' *Tehzeeb*, but Muslims had nothing to do with the *Ganga-Jamuni Tehzeeb* if we talk in terms of migration of Muslims from outside India. And if Hindus converted to Islam in medieval times then they were part of the same *Ganga Jamuni Tehzeeb* earlier too. Such concepts are deployed by ruling political elite when their power is threatened and they coin terms and seek refuge in such traditions which may not be in existence in reality at popular level.

When Kashmir evolved as a centre of power and elite, Sanskrit culture and philosophies made their appearance. People coming from different regions of central Asia, Persia, Eastern Europe, Arab world and other regions migrated and settled down in Kashmir and obviously, as stated earlier, in the process they subordinated or submerged their own culture and traditions to local culture. A Kazakh coming and settling in Kashmir accepted Kashmiri culture and claimed proudly

1. I have discussed this issue in detail in one of my articles which I showed to Professor Badri Narayan also. The article appears in a book published in New York.

that he is a Kashmiri. A Turkmenian coming from Turkmenistan would feel proud as a Kashmiri and not as a Turkmenian after he got absorbed in Kashmir region. In this process the region of Kashmir evolved as a region that accepted and assimilated people and their cultures from various parts of world where all other non-Kashmiri identities got diluted, absorbed or submerged quite naturally because of power of assimilation and harmony that region displayed.

It is this tendency of gladly accepting and assimilating people of other cultures that became the bedrock of *Kashmiriyat*. A kind of phenomenon evolved over centuries from migration of Aryan times or even earlier down to 19th century. You will be really surprised to know that there is a place in Srinagar called Guthlibad. People of Guthlibad speak one of the central Asian languages even today. These people arrived here in early 20th century during the last wave of migration. Obviously, these families had not arrived at an unpopulated island; the Kashmiris were already present there and they became part of contemporary Kashmir problem fighting for the so-called freedom of Kashmir. We can compare this case with the post World War Poland or Ukraine. For example even in Ukraine, people protested in recent times after collapse of cold war that they were trying to protect Ukrainian language but most of them are Russians who had migrated from their homeland during or before world war second . Likewise, here in Kashmir, a phenomenon evolved which had a superiority complex because of regional specificities and people who migrated to Kashmir and settled here became part of that what was claimed as superior culture. In this way, after becoming part of *Kashmiriyat*, they felt proud. And this phenomenon continued down to 11th century.

In Eleventh century this concept of *Kashmiriyat* was threatened by varied political developments. Turkish came here before 11th centuries also but they were referred as Turshukas then. From 12th century people of various

ethnicities who entered in Kashmir, some among them who wanted to capture political power, started converting locals for evolving social basis of the political power. Similar development had taken place in Central Asia after the Islamic conquest before the end of 8th century A.D. Much of those conversions, I would say, were both voluntary and under coercion. The notion that conversions were conducted by coercion only does not appeal to our rationality. It is disheartening when we see the debates on the television, sometimes ignoring historical facts to serve their ideological moorings. If someone catches hold of you and threatens you with a sword and ask you to change your religion, you may submit for the time being but the moment you go out of grip, you will decline to change your religion. Nobody on earth will change his religion on gun point. For a while, one may change, but not for all times. Anyway, mass conversions took place in Kashmir from the last decades of 11th century to 15th century and the phenomenon has a detailed history.

After first phase of conversions, we find a new king Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin (A.D.1420-1470) took over Kashmir. He invited back all those Kashmiris who had left during the rule of Sultan Sikandar who had unleashed a reign of terror for Hindus in Kashmir. But after 1470, a civil war broke out in Kashmir. And the civil war stopped only when Kashmir was taken over by Babur's maternal uncle Mirza Mohammad Haider Dughlat who ruled for forty years. He was succeeded by Chak rulers who were defeated by Mughals when Mughals took over Kashmir in A.D 1586. Entire Kashmir region was in the control of Mughals and in 1753, when Mughal rule was over, Afghans captured Kashmir. In fact if you look at the literature about Afghan rule (A.D.1753-1819) in Kashmir, they say that our largest amount of revenue came from Kashmir because they could levy heavy taxes on Kashmiris. When in 1819, the Afghan phase was over, the Sikh rule (A.D.1819-1946) was not a great relief from the age-old oppression and exploitation. The Sikhs also came from

outside the region to rule Kashmir up to 1846. In 1846, in the month of March, the British who had colonised whole of India, entered Kashmir after Anglo-Sikh war, and got into an agreement with Dogra Maharaja Gulab Singh (a lieutenant in Sikh army from Dugar valley in Himachal Pradesh) and handed over Kashmir to him as Jagir under the treaty of Amritsar in March 1846. Thus, it became the part and parcel of the territory of Dogra Maharaja. Then finally, Dogras were forced to quit in 1947 at the time of Independence of India.

In this way, right from 11th century onwards alienation was brewing among the regional Kashmiri forces who could not establish themselves as rulers under foreign invaders. This strong feeling of deprivation of political expression caused by denial of access to power to Kashmiris made them feel seriously that every external force was oppressive and not interested in the welfare of Kashmir and its inhabitants.

The Kashmiris portrayed themselves as neglected lot. My point is that in the agitation that began in Kashmir in 1990, there was a large section of people who said that right from the day of Mughal period we have been controlled by India. You can imagine they pushed their so-called freedom movement back as far as 16th century. This example points towards the underlying perception in Kashmir, which scholars have also endorsed, that they have been occupied all through if you see the local contemporary literature of Kashmir, you can find such ideas which were used by protesters for legitimising their struggle.

Let me give you a couple of examples here. In 1990 when the Kashmiris began to protest in Kashmir, before that in 1986 Ram Janam bhumi-Babari Masjid controversy took a new turn when the doors of the temple were opened, and riots began in Kashmir. If anywhere a problem is created that pertains to Muslims and Islam its repercussions can be seen and felt in Kashmir. Similarly earlier also when Al-Aksa

Mosque was controlled by Jews the Kashmiri Muslims came out in streets to protest. This was done by Kashmiris to demonstrate that they are part of Ummah which exists anywhere in the world.

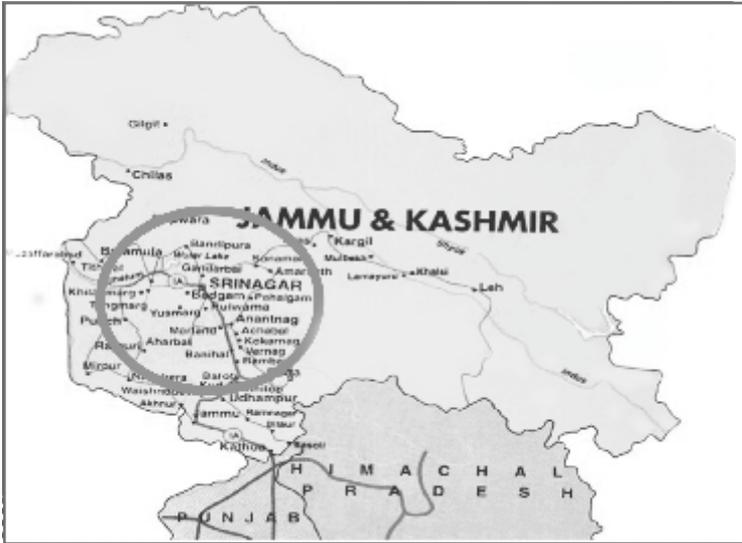
The second perception, related to Pakistan-based insurgency, dates back to partition of India in 1947. There is a religious group that believes that after partition, Pakistan started meddling in the affairs of Kashmir which created tensions, differences and divide.

The third perception is related with the political drama that ended with imprisonment of Sheikh Abdullah. In 1953, this legitimately elected ruler of Kashmir was put into jail and therefore alienation started growing among Kashmiri Muslims. We shall discuss this issue in detail in a little while.

But look at the transition of these perceptions. Very interestingly when 9/11 took place, right from then onwards, nobody is talking about the real problem. We are only talking about how many people were killed, when, how and where did they strike, but nobody is talking about the real problem. Because after 9/11 all such protests, whether armed or otherwise, which began in many parts of the world were directly linked with the terrorism. I do not doubt the presence of terrorism in Kashmir and there is a reason behind that presence. There is something that we need to explore. So you find that there is a transition in perception.

First of all, we need to keep in mind that the problem we are facing in Kashmir today is not spread all across the state, it is rather limited to a specific area of Kashmir valley only.

If we look at the trade map of Kashmir, a recent one, of nineteenth century, we find that Kashmiris were trading with Iran, Turan, Yarkand, Russia, and China from very early times down to 20th century.



The Kashmir valley portion is indicated in Circle in this map

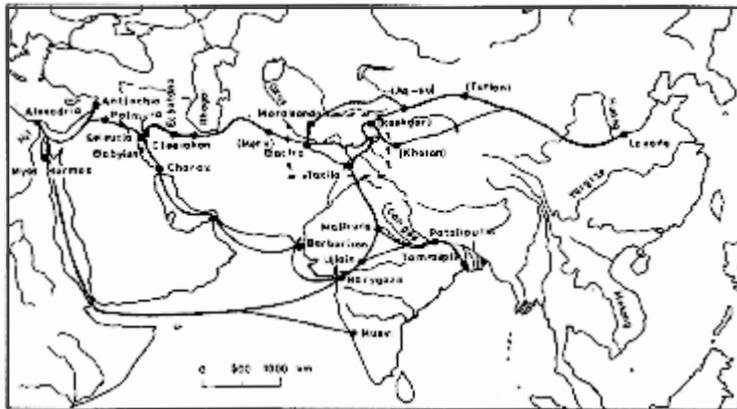
And this trade has been going on for centuries. If we look at one of the earliest trade maps of Kashmir, we find how well connected Kashmir was through the *Silk Route* to the rest of the world.

If you go to the national Museum, Sri Pratap Museum in Kashmir, National Archives of India, other depositories and libraries, in and outside the country, you will discover from record that Kashmiris were very seriously engaged in trade all over the world. Because of the nature of the products and limitations of the climatic zone, these products were not being sold in various parts of India. But what happens to this development? The World Wars took place, before that. Franco-Prussian war 1870-71 takes place which becomes the catalyst. Franco-Prussian war took place between the French and the Germans, Crimean war took place in 1856, and afterwards Balkan wars followed. With these new nationalist

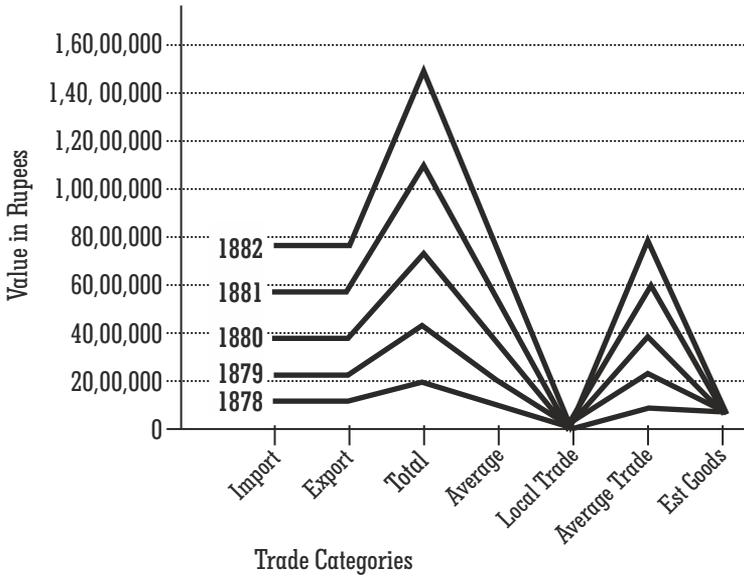
Countries	Items imported into Ladakh and Kashmir and rest of India
Russia	Iron caps, tea trays, iron boxes, lamps, locks, cotton, lanka plain brocades of coarse quality, Russian leather also known as bulgar, tables
China	Tea, tea cups, hemp, linseed black and green, medicinal herbs, roots, momiran, china silk plain flowered and brocaded, felts
Yarkand	Gold in Turkish coins of Kokand, Bokhara, grain of Khotan, jade, horses, tin sil, skins, green dyed skins, jackfruits, anklet or boots, soap, goats down, ponies, dates.
Iran	Silver in Chinese ingots, cuttings of turquoises
Turan	Drugs, tongza, gharikum, chintz, cotton, arms Broad cloth, silling or lining(this was used for carpets in Iran and Turan), felts, Moraccan hides, skins
India	Pearls, corals, opium, lime syrup, preserved fruits, ginger, sugar, sugar candy, indigo, spices, drugs, European cotton cloth, broad cloth, silling of lining, indian cotton, turbans, embroidered silk and clothes, cotton chikan, mint silk, indian shawl, looking glasses, lac dyed goat skins of Nurpura, skins from Kashmiri feathers of inomel, pheasants, treated leather, girdles, cardamoms, cooking utensils, fire stands, ammonia
Kashmir	Rice, saffron, bastard saffron, crocus petals, opium, sugar, raw tobacco, tobacco snuff of Kashmir and of Peshawar, pepper, dry pot herbs, spinach, meta lotus, mast, almond oil, walnuts, clarified butter, meal of parched rice, kulcha or Kashmiri biscuits, coarse white cotton and cotton clothes, chintz mostly blue, burkas, patchwork shawls white, carpets, hashia, lining, pashmina plain and coloured, horse glause, woolens, soap, pepper, ink, sealing wax, eastern fire pots, wicker frames, iron horse-shoes with nails, needles, wooden hair combs, finger rings, trinkets, brass locks, shells of India.

Countries	Items Exported from Ladakh
Russia	Broad cloth, pashmina shawls, salomaniac, alum, leather, charas and spices
China	Musk, crystal, jade, fine wool, pashmina shawls, molasses, charas, silver, cotton piece goods, opium, laki, spices, saffron, brocades and clothes
Yarkand	Pearls, corals, opium, preserved fruits, ginger, lime syrup from India, sugar, sugar candy, indigo, spices, drugs, european cotton cloth and cotton clothes, goat skins dyed in red from Nurpur, cotton flowered chikan, chintz of all kinds, Indian kimkhab, silk, coarse shawls, Jamiwar shawls, looking glasses, feathers of Inomel, bulk pieces of leather, heron, plumes, etlas (a kind of special cloth) and spices.
Iran	Silk, embroidered cotton, etlas, gulbadan (a kind of cloth), mint silk, Indian kimkhab, Kashmir shawls, Punjab clothes, heron, rhubarb root and spices.
Turan	Alum, salomaniac, gold, copper, cotton, sheep wool, fruit, madder asafoetida, woolen fabrics and silk.
India	China silk, silling of shawl strfts, coarse shawls, Russian and Bulgarian hides, China rhubarb root. China sea weed, hemp, drugs, gold, silver, salt and apricots.

The Silk Route and Sea Routes in Ancient Times



Ladakh Trade Figure (1878-1882)



groups and new nation states emerged. Spain became a nation, Italy, Germany and France became separate nations and then, they closed doors to all other people from outside. Until then, we do not find a Kashmiri being asked for any kind of passport or visa. Kashmiris used to freely go, sell products and come back. But after 1870 all Kashmiris living in other countries had to return back. The entire trading world collapsed. If you look at Ladakh today, it does not produce anything. It cannot produce food for a large number of the region's own population. But it was a very important centre of trade before 1870. After the emergence of world economy in the 17th century, it was listed as an important centre of world trade. It was the place where the exchange, listing, stocking and distribution of products for Amritsar, Russia, Surat, and other

places were undertaken. But after Franco-Prussian war of 1870-71 and a series of events that followed such as the Balkan wars 1908-1912, the first World War 1914-1919, Russian Revolutions 1905 and 1917, Second World War 1939-41, India's independence in 1947 and partition between India and Pakistan, the Chinese Red Army Revolution 1949, the entire central Asia, the Eastern Europe, the western Europe, regions of Russia and China which were like a playground for Kashmiris, got closed. Because there was a system of passport and visa introduced which restricted the free movement of people and trade. Then what was left for these people? If you go to the famous Museums in Paris, there are pictures and paintings of many Kashmiri families who have been decorated with awards for the best craftsmanship for production of stylish Kashmiri products and it is mentioned in one of the plaques there. One of the French adventurers say there is no house in Paris that does not have Kashmiri craft items as part of decoration.

After 1870 when people started coming back home, what was happening in the rest of India at that time? Back home in India, 1857 had already taken place. The collapse of Mughal Empire (the first war of Indian independence, or whatever you call it) had already taken place. Further, the first phase of Dogra Raj from 1846 up to 1857 was already over in Kashmir. In 1870-1872 we find that the first protest of Kashmiris against Dogra Maharaja had taken place. This protest was carried out by the state's silk factory workers from 1870-71. At that time Punjab in neighbourhood was politically and intellectually very volatile and vibrant. Lahore in Punjab, which was the hub of literary atmosphere for a long time, was now growing as a centre of vigorous political activities and associations, like many other cities of India. During this era of transition various protest movements were throwing up their ideas and ideologies, from which ultimately the political party system stemmed.

Kashmiris had a very close relationship with various towns and cities of Punjab and Lahore in particular from very early times because of being in the immediate neighbourhood. Besides in winter months, a large number of Kashmiris used to go to Punjab when there was no occupation available to them in Kashmir because of severe winter. With the opening of Jhelum Valley road in 1890s, the movement of Kashmiris to various parts of Punjab increased further. In early 20th century, when protest movements grew in various parts of rest of India, many organizations sprouted in Lahore also and they took up the issues concerning people problems. Some among these organizations were both secular and sectarian in nature. They seriously influenced Kashmiris to initiate programmes for educating their masses to ameliorate their conditions and free them from exploitative Dogra Raj.

One such association was Kashmiri *Anjuman* in Lahore, which was concerned about the problems their Kashmiri brethren were facing in the Valley under Dogra Rule (1846-1947). By and large, the *Anjuman* was initially devoted to social and cultural issues. Among those who were actively associated with the Kashmiri Anjuman in Lahore were Sir Mohammad Iqbal, Mohammad-din Fauq and many others. Fauq started '*Kashmiri Magazine*' on weekly basis from Lahore which had hitherto been issued on monthly basis. Mohammad Ud-din Fauq says that any news that was published in it about Kashmir created a lot of hope and excitement among Kashmiris in the Valley and a commotion in the government circles of the Dogra Raj. In an area of 84000 sq. miles and a population of forty lakh people, it was one of the principal papers that conveyed people's response to the exploitative government. The services that Mohammad Ud-din Fauq rendered to Kashmiris through his newspaper including '*Akhbar-i-Kashmiri-Lahore*' have been acknowledged by various sections of people cutting across religious lines.

There is no doubt about the fact that Muslim peasantry was worst exploited in Kashmir and when this exploitation was articulated in northern India through various news papers it communalized the atmosphere because the Dogra Rajas were not ready to take the blame. The Muslim orthodoxy in Lahore was interpreting the anti-feudal struggle of Kashmiris against the Dogra Raj as a reaction against Hindu domination over the Kashmiri Muslim majority. In Punjab, efforts by Kashmiris to raise the intensity of revolt against Dogra oppression added fresh layers of enmity to the ongoing controversies between Muslims and Hindu owned newspapers. As an eminent writer, Mohammad Ud Din Fauq was convinced of the hollowness of the idea of a religious conflict against the Dogra oligarchy therefore he disallowed such tendencies to dominate ideological apparatus of their struggle because he and his associates were fighting for relieving all Kashmiris, irrespective of their religious or sectarian character, from pain and agony of exploitative Dogra Raj. In Mohammad –din Fauq's writings, there is no place whatsoever for the dark ramifications of religious sectarianism or fundamentalism. This is sufficiently reflected in most of his works. In his Dewan-i-Fauq, he says:

*“Jo Insan hoke Insan se Mazhabi tasub rakhe
Na voh Hindu Na voh Muslim Na Esai na Musa.”*

(Those who discriminate between man and man, they are neither Hindus, nor Muslims nor Christians.)

As a Kashmiri, he passionately desired to see Kashmir and Kashmiris free from chains of poverty, ignorance, superstition and squalor.

Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah appeared on the political scene of Kashmir with several Muslim young men who had come into contact with Muslim leaders and propagators of pan-Islamism while studying at Aligarh and Lahore universities.

There was young men's Muslim Association in existence from 1922 and it was helping in making Muslims conscious about their deteriorating position. They joined Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah by organizing a reading room in Mohalla Syed Ali Akbar in Srinagar but that did not register much progress until the establishment of the All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference (originally founded in Lahore earlier) and in Kashmir by Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah in 1932). Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah was already very closely associated with Muslim Conference in Lahore from its inception. With his organizational skill and capacity, he took upon himself solely the major responsibility of spearheading the Kashmir's struggle against the Dogra Monarchy. He did not lose sight of the contribution of Muslim leadership of Punjab and Sind. While presiding over the first session of the Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference in October 1932, he thanked all of them in his presidential address for their contribution to the then ongoing struggle of Kashmiris. The movement for the establishment of a democratic form of government in the Jammu and State took definite roots because of direction given by Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah

Another reason for the growth of this anti Dogra Raj protest was that some of the traders, who were earlier trading on the silk route, brought in stories of struggles, freedom, and unification of Soviet Union, China which had become communist at that point of time or where the communist movement had started gaining popularity. Their stories started to impact the psyche of the Kashmiri people and they also identified themselves with the Indian freedom movement thinking that there is a struggle that is going on in India, if we also associate with them, in a similar pattern that can strengthen our struggle against the Dogra Raj. Therefore, the struggle went on in Kashmir against the Maharaja.

Muslim conference got divided into two parts one retained

the conservative tag and the other became a secular National conference under Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah who commanded the respect of a large section of Kashmiris in general and Kashmiri Muslims in particular. There are many interesting anecdotes that explain the support enjoyed by Sheikh Abdullah. Maulavi Yusuf Shah, leader of the Muslim Conference, left India, in fact he was shooed away by Sheikh Abdullah, because of his conservative inclinations. Sheikh Abdullah said that we have to be secular, we cannot keep our struggle limited to the Muslims alone. In this part of country, outside Kashmir, I find some people, politicians and journalists, sometimes ridiculing Sheikh Abdullah, but I still admire him as a secular politician. Let me tell you that if he was alive in 1990, riots would not have taken place in Kashmir. We can talk about these perceptions at some other time.

The Kashmiri movement went on but it had different kinds of scenarios in Kashmir, which was of course, the case in rest of India also. Indian National Congress stretched its umbrella to cover up everything but if you ask an ordinary peasant in Bundelkhand what was he fighting for before 1947, he would say he was fighting against the 'Jagirdar'. In Hyderabad, the answer would be: 'against the Nizam'. He was fighting against feudalism, against the immediate oppression, the oppression being attributed to the British as well. But what Congress did was that it engulfed all these peasant struggles and other protest movements, took control of all these under the umbrella of Indian National Congress. Ordinary Kashmiris were nothing more than peasants at that time and Sheikh Abdulla was preaching them in their own language. He would often use the term 'Our Qaum', thumping his chest, Kashmiri People interpreted this term as 'Kashmiri nation'. 'We are a nation' they thought because all over the world nations were taking shape. They would misconstrue that we are a 'nation'. If you address them very frequently and tell them that 'this is our Qaum and we have to fight for it' there are chances of

misinterpretation. This perception made a dent into the minds of the common Kashmiri. And that dent has not been set right till now. This means notions such as this also play a very significant role in terms of destroying or building different kinds of struggles and build expectations from them.

With their own interpretations, we find that people in Kashmir started rallying around Sheikh Abdullah because he threw himself against Muslim Conference as the champion of anti-feudal struggle in Kashmir. People began to rally around him, both the Hindus and the Muslims. We have plenty of debate which I have cited in my book also that people of all walks of life, all religions came forward and became the part of National Conference. But when the struggle ultimately reached its climax in 1947 and country became free so were Kashmiris also freed from Dogra Raj but India got partitioned. Accession of Kashmir into Indian Union took place. There is a very interesting story about how accession was carried out between India and these regional rulers, particularly Kashmir. Maharaja, till the last moment, was trying to be independent; He did not want to integrate with India or Pakistan. But when he found that the raiders began to sneak from Pakistan and started looting and killing Kashmiris, he hurriedly sent his prime-minister to Delhi to meet Jawaharlal Nehru and seek help. Nehru was in one of the rooms and in the second room Sardar Patel and Sheikh Abdullah were there. When Maharaja's emissary came, without any humility he told Nehru that he had come to seek help, military support and if Nehru did not offer the relief, he would go to Pakistan. Nehru lashed at him. He became angry and shouted at him. Sheikh Abdullah and Sardar Patel came out of their room when they heard Nehru Shouting and convinced Nehru to offer support. Then he went back with Krishna Menon to extract the Maharajas signature on accession document. When the letter of accession was brought Menon also leaked the content of letter to the British. The British official expressed satisfaction, while pouring

drink for Menon he said that ultimately you have extracted this letter from the bastard (that was how Maharaja Hari Singh was referred) Nevertheless, the support was given and Maharaja Hari Singh left Kashmir. Sheikh Abdullah became the interim prime-minister. In 1952 the elections took place to form the constituent assembly in Kashmir and Sheikh Abdullah won all the seats. He had full majority in the constituent assembly.

The national leaders obviously had faith in National Conference, today we may accuse him but at that point of time Kashmiris were with Sheikh Abdullah. What we feel today is that the question of nationality, the question of integration, the question of arrangement between the centre and state were not defined in areas like north-east and Kashmir. When Sheikh Abdullah came to Delhi to sort out the political rearrangements, the different political groups were seeking full integration of Kashmir like other regions without conceding anything for national Conference. We find that it was Nehru himself who said that temporarily the provision of article 370 will protect the rights of the Kashmiris. But behind the scene the Anglo-American lobby that was working, had its own vested interests in Kashmir and it interfered consistently. After the end of Second World War followed the Cold War. For containing the then Soviet Russia in the strategies of this Cold War the Anglo-American block felt that they should have a strategic asset in south Asia so that they can emerge as arbitrators in any eventuality. That most appropriate strategic asset was Kashmir region from where they could have access to several countries in the region and therefore facilitate political unsettlement of Kashmir. Then the Anglo-American block gave the idea of having a plebiscite in Kashmir, knowing fully well that that the plebiscite will be fractured in Kashmir and then, they will be able to control. Plebiscite never took place because India did not want that. Sheikh Abdullah initially agreed to the proposition but the riots continued unabated both in India and

Pakistan, so the idea of plebiscite was never promoted and I am sure after abrogation of the temporary article 370 at any point in future some Kashmiris would fall back on Plebiscite demand again.

As a result, as expected, UN deployed its observers in both parts of Kashmir. When you enter Srinagar you will find a small post of UN observers. This observatory has existed right from 1947-48 till date.

While all this was happening, a pertinent question is: Why Nehru could not go with article 370 the way we had decided or could not hold a plebiscite? When Patel visited Kashmir to assess what was happening there after the first war in 1947, he came back and said: “Well, we should leave Kashmir to Kashmiris.” He was never in favour of integration of Kashmir. That was the situation at that point of time because of communal violence. We need to understand that there was a kind of commotion and that influenced the psyche of the people because of the partition and subsequent communal violence. People were thinking in terms of their religious identities and nothing beyond. The communal feelings got strengthened. As a result when Sheikh Abdullah, with three of his colleagues went to Delhi, Patel, Nehru, and others did not even listen to him and he went back. They did not agree to any of his proposals. After returning he started giving long lectures on Article 370 and other issues concerning India in the constituent assembly of Kashmir. Obviously India was not as organised as it is today, as strong as it is today; it was not an international force of any reckoning as it is today, therefore, people in Kashmir felt that Delhi was not taking them seriously and they threw their wholehearted support behind Sheikh Abdullah. Sheikh left Kashmir and went to Indore, then he went to Chennai (Madras then) and from there he returned to Delhi all the way giving long lectures and stressing the need to preserve the autonomy of Kashmir in his discourse, which was not liked by the government of India

and the Indian politicians. People, apart from the non-Congress politicians, within the Congress party also, began to behave differently. They did not agree to any of the points that Sheikh Abdullah raised. As a result, we find that when Sheikh Abdullah went back to Kashmir and after he left Shyama Prasad Mukerjee was sent to Kashmir to assess the situation. This delegation was necessitated by Praja Parishad agitation in Jammu, which began after people realised full and unconditional integration of Kashmir into Indian Union had not taken place. In this agitation 200 people died in Kashmir, 400 died across the country and surprisingly, a good number of them were from the towns of Uttar Pradesh also. The agitation was quite forceful and people were demanding complete and unconditional integration of Kashmir. They refused to recognise article 370 or plebiscite. Unfortunately, Shyama Prasad Mukerjee died while he was trying to assess the situation in Kashmir. We do not know what the exact reason of his death was. Some people say he had a heart problem for some time, others claim that he lost his life mysteriously. Only the God knows what happened. But when this agitation was at its peak, Jawaharlal Nehru was asked by the national leaders to arrest Sheikh Abdullah immediately and establish order in Kashmir. In fact, that was the day when Nehru said that if there is a problem in the night his assistants can walk down to his bedroom and disturb him in the night also. He said: "I had planted a tree with my own hands which I do not want to uproot but I am forced to do that." So, Sheikh Abdullah was removed from power and the state was handed over to a new Prime Minister Bakshi Gulam Mohammad. I recall here what the Maharaja said when he sent his emissary to Delhi in 1947. He decided to move to Jammu along with his wife. He did not speak a word till he reached Jammu. After reaching his home in Jammu he said to his entourage "Kashmir is lost." That was the last word he uttered. To his deputies he said that if the prime minister did not return with military support from Delhi, they should pick up a gun and shoot at him in his bed itself rather than leaving him alive to

in Pakistan and Pakistan occupied areas of Kashmir because of the height of military rule in Pakistan. Therefore, he was able to see everything from the vantage point of view and hence he appealed people that remaining in India would be better because Pakistan was a shaky country and its ideology was not based on secularism.

By the time Sheikh Abdullah became the chief minister in 1975, the Jamat people had also tasted power by filling in their people in various departments. Therefore, even after coming to power, Abdullah could not do much to strengthen the linkages between India and Kashmir. As a result when Sheikh Abdullah died the Congress divided his family and extended support to his daughter and son-in-law Gulam Mohammad Shah. This created a kind of vicious circle in which every incumbent tried to hang on to power but none attempted transforming the power. A peculiar trend developed during this period. People started to misconstrue that since Sheikh Abdullah questioned the legitimacy of India, therefore Indian leaders in the centre strengthened him. To some extent, this was true also. Sheikh Abdullah questioned the legitimacy of India and he was rehabilitated, later on his son followed the suite and he also became the chief minister, and recently you must have seen the interview of Mehbooba Mufti on the television, supporting the Pakistani proxy-war. From the day she has broken ties with BJP, she has been giving pro-Pakistan statements because there has been a trend that has not been reversed. We hope that BJP government will reverse that.

The third important thing is that you have BSP, Samajwadi Party, and many other parties in other states and tomorrow a new party may be floated anywhere in India but in Kashmir, never ever a secular alternative idea was allowed to exist. All other forces standing against the National Conference, opposing National Conference to be a secular party, are religion based, And now the situation has reached to a state of

face any untoward situation. When power goes, the wielder of the power is dead.

Sheikh Abdullah was removed and then onwards we have attributed all our problems to Article 370, but as a matter of fact, there is virtually nothing in this article, it has eroded to a great extent but it remains a psychological barrier. At one point of time, after the war of 1965, I have the evidence, that article 370 was completely lifted and even Pakistan agreed to it. Article 370 is meaningless for all practical purposes.

1953 onwards, we find that there were three political forces that began to emerge. One was Sheikh Abdullah, a popular politician who was in jail, the Jamat-e-Islami, and the Congress. Jamat was a radical Muslim organisation sponsored from Pakistan. It intruded Kashmir in 1946 and opened its office here. It began to grow its bases among the rural educated middle class but did not participate in elections. However, between 1953 and 1964, Congress grew its base in urban Kashmir and totally changed whatever was agreed or disagreed earlier, tried to integrate, forcibly or otherwise, issues that were hitherto left unattended. During this period, Pakistani prime-minister often visited India and requested Congress leaders to hold talks to negotiate over the pending issues like Rann of Kutch, migrants, and others but Nehru was not bothered. The Pakistani prime minister went on records saying whenever he started the discussion, Nehru would divert the issues. As a result Pakistan facilitated a war in 1965 which I witnessed vividly, personally and I can recall the shells that were hurled on us from across the border. Hereafter, government of India committed a number of mistakes in the integration process.

Jamat-e-Islami, which was working as a force for Nizam-e-Mustafa, to establish a separate Muslim state, very close to the desires of Pakistan, and asserted that it wanted to be part of Pakistan, came close to the Congress. On the other hand,

Sheikh Abdullah, who was jailed, the fellow who had earlier supported accession, started raising questions about the accession. if you look at his interviews in Illustrated Weekly at that time he said,: “how can India think Kashmir is part and parcel of India unless the injustice done to Sheikh Abdullah is undone.”

This was how National Conference said that it wanted independent Kashmir; the other, *Jamat-i-Islami*, asserted that it wanted to either become an Islamic state or be part of Pakistan. This actually meant that both the organisations were standing closer to each other and away from Congress party. So, the Congress party thought that the best solution was to create a wedge between the two. If a wedge is created, the two forces will not be able to survive for a long period of time. In this way in the congress began to woo even *Jamat-i-Islami* after the war of 1971, the *Jamat-e-Islami*, which claims today that it is against the Indian constitution, contested the elections and swore of Indian Constitution.

Kashmir was the only state that went for land reforms as early as 1947-50. Because of the successful land reforms, the peasants and the farm workers were all in favour of Sheikh Abdullah. After 1971, the process of dilution continued though Jamat-e-Islami was brought into state's electoral politics and Sheikh Abdullah was kept away. From 1971 to 75 there were spells of defection in Indian politics and in 1975 the legitimately elected chief minister of Congress party was asked to go and Sheikh Abdullah was brought in from nowhere and imposed as the chief minister.

Some journalists have written stories that Sheikh Abdullah was feeling completely defeated, he was hungry for power when he was reinstated. Nothing can be farther from truth than this notion that Sheikh Abdullah was hungry for power. He had visited almost all the Muslim countries and was aware of the affairs of these countries. He had seen worse conditions

disjunction in which neither the religious forces are able to penetrate; because not many people are illiterate anymore to buy those religious ideas, nor the secular forces are in a position to improve anything. The open plunder of resources has taken place much more frequently than any other state in India. Therefore, unless the government of India facilitates the development of a new political group, as an opposition to the central forces that are operating there, there is not going to be any hope for peace. Some of us think this is internal story of Kashmir but there are also external forces meddling here. Apart from Pakistan, Europeans are involved, you must have seen yesterday that during world cup cricket match series, a plane came flying over the stadium and displayed the banner in which it was written that oppression and killings of Kashmiris be stopped. This kind of atrocious mischief cannot be accomplished without the connivance of the ruling elements in London. Can any of our pilots attempt such an adventure without the consent of government of India?

Today Pakistan, the main brain behind the violence in Kashmir is also increasingly getting frustrated because of her inability to find solution to the variety of problems she is confronting day in and day out. Pakistanis should know that if they don't move speedily towards democracy and its allied prerequisites, their long-term stagnation, violence and fragmentary attitude will not only be shameful but destructive as well. The peaceful existence is shaped by different cultural practices. Islam should not be used to create artificial barrier between peace and war, it carries rich meaning and also bestows blessings on humanity. India and Pakistan have similar tragic histories. Their people have identical mental and emotional dynamics, only volumes and composition differ. Both are reacting out of their basic fears, aspirations, needs and anger. They have so much in common yet they want to eliminate each other. They should honestly reflect on the conditions of their people with a human heart, but unfortunately both sides buried their cultural heritage in

endless and unwanted conflicts when each of them have so much to offer to each other and to this world.

Brien Hallett very rightly says that psychologically, terror is a state of intense fear. But most of the people do not turn as terrorists because they respect rule of law and want to seek solution to problems of injustice through law and negotiation. Therefore till the resolution of the problem we should respect the sanctity of life and dignity of all involved in the settlement of problem including oppressors.

Kashmir has greatly suffered because of impact of decolonization, post world war and during the cold war, when United States and Soviet Union held the world in two camps. The legacy of colonialism also lead to strife in Middle East after the Perestroika. With the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the various Central Asian States became free. This also encouraged Kashmiri Muslims to have a separate state of their own but we must remember that the nation's existence does not only depend on a location or political identity alone , it is distinct society of people dedicated to a region , a distinct ethnic group sharing distinct language , religion and history , this was not the case in Kashmir. Kashmir has had a shared past and it was not an independent political unit to claim its own jurisdiction over defined territory. Kashmiris' need to consider that multiple nations cannot stay in a country , while a nation may abide by its own procedures , its decisions hold no borders, validity, unless granted by surrounding states. If Pakistan is singing this song of Nationalism for Kashmiris they need to understand that it is their existence and future that is at stake.

Besides this kind of political development has to be viewed from two more perspectives : On the one hand, for the people of Kashmir, there were the grievances against the centre for its manipulations and on the other hand, a feeling of betrayal was generated which kept people away from its own

mainstream politics. Thus, more and more religious and separatist forces started playing their own game and in the process militancy became an industry for some people to benefit immensely.

What approach, then, India should adopt? Though in any such separatist violence the use of military power is inevitable but at the same time the Centre and State governments should not give up the idea of peace process. The need of the hour is that there should be more and more debates on Kashmir. As such, today's demand is that the debate should involve a wider section of Kashmiri society. Jammu and Ladakh are also stake holders and their people need to be involved in the discussion process. Those entrusted with the security of the region and the territorial integrity of the country should definitely be taken into consideration. But larger share in volume of articulation should go to Kashmiris in and outside the country. Views of retired officers/bureaucrats who have served in the valley, intelligentsia, Kashmiri pandits, businessmen, scholars, analysts, journalists etc. should be given their space in bringing about a holistic approach to the problem. Presently, selected Kashmiri politicians and leaders are called to express their views on pre-decided agenda and this kind of political activism will not help solve the problem unless the above stakeholders are taken into considerations for wider negotiations and consultations.

Alongside these measure, the cyber crime and the regulating of social media has to be kept under check. The resilience of Kashmiri militants has been tested, they are not hardcore, but it is their simple motivation clothed in false religiosity and fake heroism, which appears tempting to them because, Kashmiris are relatively more emotional and long period of violence has blurred their culture and political perspective. Larger legal forums should be established to settle the legal cases pending against the terrorists and civilians on fast track basis. We cannot neglect people's genuine issues, they have to

be addressed on priority basis. We should promote locally nationalist leaders, poets, literary figures and community wise other eminent personalities. Local conditions should be studied and necessary legislation be brought in, if found necessary, for future human existence. In Kashmir's case, the ideological directions differ from governance pattern. It is not that the Kashmiris are stiff and unyielding by nature, when we look into their history. Indian approach has to be central to larger settings of social construction in Kashmir, the shape of economy, industry, technology is inextricably connected to larger social groupings. For six months of winter, people almost go without work, and it breeds evil, given the history of early Kashmir, it will be hard to predict that during 21st century Kashmir would consume more attention than any other state, because before each strata in Kashmir becomes possessive of anti Indian sentiments, the Indian policy makers should create structures that underlie personal expectations, assumptions and what is normal and possible. We have testimony of people that innocents were killed alongside hardcore militants, time is running out and militancy is shaping the consciousness of future generations very fast, therefore it is right time to make phenomenological assumption that world into which one is born has certain shapes, textures, rhythms and energies and these characteristics have formed the ground against which the experiences appear familiar or uniform, comfortable or disconcerting, and each policy has to be used to shape distinctive domestic pattern in Kashmir.

People in Kashmir are central to understanding of national issues; Kashmiris have had a frequently changing relationship with rest of India which is dominated by perpetual tension, a relationship of confidential confrontation, a relationship that has been dominated by persistent myths and obscurity. For this there are reasons because at each succession and dismissal of government in Kashmir only hatred towards India was grown, the real understanding of

issues was not articulated, except through coercive language. This made their story more complicated and unfortunately either not all police and military officials connected with the job in Kashmir and outside are really knowledgeable about the whole dealing at grass root level (which is most unlikely) or they intentionally perform as they do. I treat Kashmir situation as outcome of complex negotiation between ordinary people and the state government, the way of subjecting people and labelling them and putting them into coercion would make no sense to most of the people in present times. Therefore, for power at the center has to facilitate comparisons between different sections for obtaining substitutes for everyday people lives , it becomes obvious that a constant increase in violence unleashes the succession of protests , we have to convert this energy into more established receptiveness and see how that can create appetite for peaceful co existence.

Kashmiris do not lack intelligence but unfortunately in recent past they have evolved another way to live because of a large spell of violence. Each temporary and short-sightedness of India's policy really gave Kashmiri separatist a decisive advantage, each energetic terrorist activity seem to justify victory. The use of firearms undermined the nature of Kashmiri tradition (*Kashmiriyat*) but it joined Kashmiris to the wider world of terrorism unwantedly, this is the contribution of Pakistan. The application of various atrocity acts like AFSA and counter terrorist strategies which were historically inevitable transformed Kashmir society to such an extent that they forgot to pursue their lives in old ways- in which knowledge, harmony, peace and brotherhood are still part of the bedrock. Going to Pakistan initially gave Kashmiris inducement to join militancy for economic purposes, it destroyed their world, since the Kashmir used to sit indoors for almost five months a year, in absence of larger industries.

The policy makers on Kashmir in Delhi should realize that the process of policing or militarization will not alone explain Kashmiri culture. Every Culture evolves over a long period of history in consonance with region's specificities and the degree of civilization of any epoch of people is measured by the ability of people to utilize their ideas and energy for human advancement. Given the nature of culture and society the policies of coercion should be well defined because increase in policing, repressive measures and militarization is not a faster route to peace.

We cannot stop Kashmiris from interacting with Pakistanis because of the modern technologies and communication nobody can live in isolation; they can neither have timeless static relation with Pakistan nor a perfect harmony with rest of India unless there is cure for their grievances and unless they consider themselves as part and parcel of this country .



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