

Saints and Sages of Kashmir



Ancient & Modern Ascetics in Kashmir



SAINTS AND SAGES OF KASHMIR

ANCIENT AND MODERN ASCETICS IN KASHMIR



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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The history of India has for its landmarks not wars and emperors but saints and scriptures.

- Dr. S. Radhakrishnan

Kashmir Shaivism has penetrated to that depth of living thought where diverse currents of human wisdom unite in a luminous synthesis.

- Rabindranath Tagore

The nations have a history as well as geography. They grow not by the sun and stars, the wind and rain but by the creative Spirits who by precept and practice, work toward the establishment of universal brotherhood of man, overcoming the artificial barriers of caste, creed or colour.

In the last millennium, Kashmir, as also the rest of India, has produced a galaxy of great saints, seers and savants who have enriched, elevated and refined life and helped the people at large in distress. In India, we have had illustrious God-men like Kabir, Tulsi, Surdas, TukaRam, Srikrishna Chaitanya, Eknath, Narsi Mehta, Tyagaraja, Dhyaneshwar, Tiruvalluvar, Namdev, Mirabai, Dayanand, Guru Nanak, Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Vivekananda, Swami Ram, Shri Sai Baba of Shirdi, Ramana Maharishi, Sri Satya Sai Baba, and Sri Aurobindo. In Kashmir, too, we have had the great fortune of producing greatsaints like Lalleshwari, Rupa Bhawani, Sheikh Nuruddin, Parmanand, Rishipir, Jeewan Shah, Lassa Sahib, Anandji, Ramji, Sahib Kaul, Manas Razdan, Zaikak, Kakaji Mastana, Grata Bab, Ramjoo Tabardar, Vidya Dar, Shankar Razdan, Bhagwaan Gopinath Ji, Kashkak, Sona Kak, Nandlal Ji, Swami Lakshman Joo, Sati Devi and Mathura Devi.

These saints belong to all times and to all nations. They transcend the bonds of communities and conventions, place and time. They are born to serve God by serving His creatures. A saint, a seer and a sage is, indeed a universal phenomenon.

In the present troubled times when the people of the Valley, Kashmiri Pandits in particular, are passing through untold miseries, the only solace comes from our glorious philosophic and spiritual traditions enriched by our saints and sufis. The sayings of Lalla Arifa echo and re-echo to this day. She sang in the language of the masses. A mystic of the purest ray serene, Lalla urged the people to rise above caste, creed and colour and see the light within.

***"SHIV CHHUY THALI THALI ROZAN,
MO ZAN HYUND TA MUSALMAN,
TRUK AY CHHAUK TA PAN PANUN PARZANAV,
SOI CHHAY SAHIBAS SATI ZANI ZAN"***

***(Siva is all-pervading and present in each particle.
Never differentiate between a Hindu and a Muslim.
If you are shrewd and intelligent, know THY SELF.
There lies acquaintance with god".)***

Long after her, Parmanand gave us a recipe for attaining peace of mind.

***"SANTOSHI BYALI BHAVI ANAND PHAL "
(Contentment leads to perennial joy and bliss.)***

We have not been able to collect details of most of our saints and seers. But a good number of them are represented here and most of these have been drawn from our special numbers issued in the past. We are grateful to the learned authors whose articles on various saints have been reproduced here for the benefit of all, particularly our youth, who, I am sure, will derive inspiration and strength from the lives of these Sages and Seers.

Source: **Koshur Samachar**

Contributed by: Sh. G. N. Raina

Some of the well-known saints are tabulated as under:

Jaman Ded	Lived about 200 years ago. She was often found roaming about in the mountains near the Amar Nath cave.
Rishi Pir	Lived in the time of Jehangir.
Zanana Zui	Resided at Rainawari (Srinagar), was contemporary of Rishi Pir. Lived about 1570 A.D.
Krishna Pandit Taplu	Resided at Bhoru Kadal (Srinagar). He discovered the shrine of Khir Bhawani which had become unknown during the Muhammadan rule. His descendents practised fortune-telling by looking into the Brihat-Katha.
Bhasker Razdan	Grandfather of Manas Razdan. Wrote a commentary on 60 sayings of Lalleshwari in Sanskrit Verse. Lived about 250 years ago.
Krishna Kar	Resided at Rainawari (Srinagar); was contemporary of Rishi Pir.
Manas Razdan	Resided at Bana Mohalla. He practiced austerities at Qiladar, Punjab, which has since become the Mecca of the Kashmiri Pandits.
Sodi Woni	Had darshan of Shiva at Shishram Nag.
Jiwan Sahib	Lived about the middle of Eighteenth Century of Christian era. Resided at Rainawari.
Zana Sahib	Was the Guru of Chana Sahib.
Mirza Kak	Lived at Hangalgund - a village above Achhabal, about 100 years ago. His sayings in Kashmiri verse are current among the people.
Nidhan Sahib	Lived at the village of Moran (Avantipora Tehsil). Died in Sambat 1925.
Chana Sahib	Lived at Rainawari. Died in Sambat 1928.
Gopal Sahib	Lived in a hut under a Chenar tree at Barbar Shah.
Isher Sahib	Died in 1880, having lived to an old age. Lived at Habba Kadal.
Govind Bajju	Lived at Rainawari.
Manas Matu	Died in 1878 A.D. having lived to an old age.

Saints and Sages of Kashmir

Ancient and Modern Ascetics in Kashmir

Anand Ji	Died at an advanced age at Jama Nagar, a village near Shopyan in 1917 A.D.
Lal Shah	Died at Rainawari in 1918 A.D. at an advanced age.
Labi Shah	Lived at the Tulumula village during the governorship of Colonel Miyan Singh.
Ganesh Das	Lived at Gush, a village in Uttar Machipura.
Thakar Prashad Choudhri <i>alias</i> Bawa Presidh Nath	This ascetic's ashram is at Etawah. Bawa Braham Nath was the Mahant of his ashram.

Source:

The Kashmiri Pandit
by Pandit Anand Koul
Thacker, Spink & Co.
Calcutta

2.0 SAINTS AND SAGES OF MODERN KASHMIR

Their Role In Modern World And For Kashmiri Pandits

Professor S. Bhatt

From time to time Kashmiri Samiti brings out a special issue of Koshur Samachar in honour of our saints and sages. One does understand the urge to bring out such publications for the benefit of our society and world society. Indeed because of globalisation of knowledge and culture, and in view of the fact that these heroes are a good source of harmony for our civilization, there is growing awareness to write about their role in modern world. We serve the cause of international brotherhood of mankind when we put before the world the message and the philosophy of our saints.

The saints of Kashmir are to Kashmiri Pandits their ancestors and they represent their heritage. Each Pandit has a 'gotra', a link to his clan, established by a Reshi, a saint long ago. There are over a hundred gotras. Thus Kashmir is also called Reshwar, meaning a habitat of reshis. In fact in the genetic and social sense, it is true to say that all Kashmiri Pandits of past and present are sages or their descendants. Some readers may question this observation which is based on scientific knowledge of genetics. Thus we find in the historical and the recent study of Kashmir, Kashmiri Pandits playing a saintly role in world affairs. One such Pandit was Jawaharlal Nehru who had a global vision of peace and harmony. He enunciated non-alignment and international cooperation in an age of global conflict. He promoted secularism in India in order to produce peace among various religious groups. The accession of Kashmir to India in 1947 was based on secularism and pluralism being the gospels of life-style in India. A great Indian scholar, Prof. Rashiduddin Khan, formerly of Jawaharlal Nehru University and Hamdard University has called attention of all people in India to live by the "Heritage of Jawaharlal Nehru". Here was a sage of modern era who combined science and secularism in making a dynamic and progressive India. Generation in the 21st century will recall his ever-lasting contribution in synthesizing the cultures and ideas of various religions and communities into a cosmopolitan scientific society in India. Secularism means equal respect for all religions, he said. It seems secularism is a new religion for the 21st century. Jawaharlal Nehru belonged to a Kaul dynasty of Kashmir, established by some reshi. Kashmiri Pandits and their organizations have a role to foster the development of global harmony. Indeed promoting global harmony by us is not a useless undertaking. There can be no better vocation than to let mankind live in peace. A harmony movement based on the noble ideas of Kashmiri saints is worth our efforts. By this process, we shall enrich our heritage at a time when our heritage is threatened by fundamental forces in Kashmir and in other parts of India and the world.

2.1 Global Fundamentalism Vs Secularism

During past few years the world is experiencing a conflict between fundamental forces of religion and the secular forces based on equal respect for all religions. At many places we have seen bloodshed in former Yugoslavia, in parts of Asia and Africa and in Kashmir itself. A prominent scholar, Prof. Samuel Huntington, Professor at Harvard University has written in 1996 a book widely publicised with the title. "The clash of civilizations and the remaking of world order". The book deals with the subject of fundamentalism which according to the author may lead to a clash between various civilizations of America, Europe, China, Russia, India and the Muslim countries. He referred to the Kashmir problem, while on a visit to India, being caused by the fundamental forces operated from outside Kashmir. A solution to the clash of civilizations, according to the author, should be sought in accommodating them into one common civilization of mankind.

Kashmiri saints and sages have throughout history suggested a philosophy of resolving conflicts due to fundamentalism. Thus Shaivism, Sufism and the Kashmiriat which represent the way of life of all Kashmiri Hindus and Muslims are worthy philosophies which need to be recalled in our age and re-interpreted to counter the forces of fundamentalism.

2.2 Meditative Insights of Sages

I do not wish to list all the prominent sages of Kashmir in this short article who have produced harmony for mankind. Suffice to recall here that Lal Ded, Nund Rishi, Bhagwan Gopinath, are a few examples of our seers who have produced a profound impact on our society. In a world where communications are expanding fast, and knowledge about Kashmiriat and its spiritual and social philosophy is being carried to far corners of the world, it is time to think and do further research on the role of these saints for our society and for world society. The foremost service these saints did to mankind was to install a sense of unity among various religions. I think this major contribution needs to be highlighted again to counter global fundamentalism. Saints have shown new insights and new methods to produce harmony of religions. The knowledge about the universe is also a subject that modern science is pursuing. Thus the meditative insights of the sages is identical to the modern philosophy of science in which attempt is made to integrate scientific knowledge. Prof. Ilya Prigogine who was awarded a Nobel prize in physics in 1977 has called our attention to seek the unity of scientific insights with the vision of saints.

I have attempted to write on the contribution of Bhagwan Gopinath to the world order of the 21st century.' in recent times, Bhagwanji was loved by all Hindus and Muslims in Kashmir. He had seen the vision of God. He helped perform many acts based on his extraordinary spiritual insights. Above all, he produced harmony in Kashmir. An International Foundation is being established at Pamposh Enclave to propagate his ideas the world over. Many global centres of Bhagwanji have already been established outside India in USA, Australia etc. He represents the essence of Kashmiri Pandit heritage. Globally speaking, the younger generation in particular may read about this great saint of Kashmir of recent times who passed away in 1968 in Srinagar. He was a mystic of the highest order. And mysticism has finally caught up in the global curriculum, because in a modern scientific world mysticism has come to be associated with the scientific insight. Albert Einstein has said of mysticism: "The fairest thing is the mysterious; it is the cradle of true art and true science". In the global environment movement of our times when man is striving to understand nature and know about its mysteries, mysticism practiced by seers like Bhagwan Gopinath is of great value. Mysticism provides a new perception on the nature and science in general.

2.3 Concluding Remarks

I conclude my observations on our saints and sages with the plea that we ought to adopt and promote their philosophy in our daily life. There is need to study their lives and times, their aspiration for a better world, and their efforts for promoting Kashmiriat and global harmony. After all each one of us has a genetic and family link with these sages. We need to interpret their ideas and philosophy in the context of present problems of society. A small community such as the Kashmiri Pandits has produced a galaxy of outstanding saints and sages whose importance to world community cannot be ignored. They are torch bearers for a new world of 21st century. They have impact on our future shape of things to come. Some aspects of the creative unity of mankind based on the role of our saints is examined elsewhere by us in a recent academic treatise.

1. See S. Bhat, *Patrika*, Vol VIII, July 1997.

2. See Prof S. shaft and Prof. V.S. Mani, India on the Threshold of the 21st century: shape of things to come, a product of Jawaharlal Nehru university, New Delhi, 1999, pages 413, Lancers Books, New Delhi.

Source: **Koshur Samachar**

3.0 MYSTIC TRENDS IN KASHMIRI POETRY

Dr. Krishna Raina

Ours is a great country. We have had for centuries a great history, the whole of the East reflects our culture. We have to present what India taught right from the Mohenjo-Darro and Harappa times. These are the precious words of Dr S. Radhakrishnan. Kashmir is the most important part of this great country with a rich geographical, historical, cultural and literary background. It is known as a famous seat of learning. Kalhana has given us the first chronological order of the kings of Kashmir and thus Rajtarangini is the first history of Kashmir written in the 12th Century.

Kashmir is supposed to be the originating center of human culture, and it is popularly known as the Paradise on Earth. Kashmir is famous for its Pratyabhijnya system of Kashmir Shaivism which has given radical revisions of Indian Philosophy. Pratyabhijnya Philosophy is the main contribution of Kashmir to Indian philosophy. Shri Somananda was the originator of this philosophy and Utpaldevak Abhinav Gupta and others were main expounders of this philosophy. Buddhism has also a long history in Kashmir. The great Buddhist Council was held in Kanishka's time near Harwan, known then as Kundala-Vana-Vihara. Kashmiri scholars have written much about Buddhism and have translated many works. Indian Literature without the contribution of Kashmir would be hollow. Kashmir has produced scholars of Sanskrit Kavya Shastra: Vamana, the founder of the Riti School and Udbhatta, the teacher of different theories of Riti; Rudratta, Ananda Vardhana, Mamatta and Abhinavgupta, Kayyatta, Ruyyaka and Mahima Batta-all were Kashmiris. Anand Vardhana is the founder of Dhvani School and Mammatta of Rasa School. Abhinavgupta's doctrine is that Rasadhvani is the soul of Literature. Patanjali was also a Kashmiri. Thus Kashmir has given a lot to the Indian Poetics and Literature. Kashmir has produced many Sanskrit scholars and mystics. The cultural life of Kashmir has had the impress of great mystics.

The main language of Kashmir is Kashmiri. It is said that it is a mixed language and the greater part of its vocabulary is of Indian origin and it is allied to that of Sanskrit-Indo-Aryan languages of Northern India.

Kashmiri poetry begins with the works of great mystic poetess Lalleshwari of 14th century. Her Guru was Siddha Srikantha and she learnt yoga from him. Lal Ded propounded the yoga philosophy and high moral truths in Kashmiri verse. These are called Lala Vakh or sayings of Lal Ded. These sayings are the gems of Kashmiri poetry and true knowledge of yoga. These are deep and sublime. She was influenced by Kashmir Shaivism and Shankracharya's Advaita Philosophy. Lal Ded's God is Nirguna. She wanted to make Shaivism easy for common man. She says that one who thinks himself not different from the other; one who accepts sorrow as good as pleasure; one who frees himself from duality; he and he alone tells the beads of Lord of the Lords-Almighty and this is the basic thinking of Shaivism. She held a key to many mystic truths. The following stanza illustrates her deep mystic thought:

*"So my lamp of knowledge afar,
Fanned by slow breath from the throat of me.
They, my bright soul to my self revealed.
Winnowed I abroad my inner light.
And with darkness around me sealed,
Did I garner truth and hold Him tight."
(Translated by Sir Richard Temple)*

Lal Ded thinks dissolution of 'self' (Aham) essential for Realisation. According to her, Sadhaka has to reach that mental attitude where there is no difference between 'Him' and 'self'. She says

one who considers his own self and others alike ends the distinction between 'I' and 'you', who treats days and nights alike, who is above sorrows and pleasures, can only realize God in his ownself. According to her, differentiation between the human soul and Divine-self was Zero. Lal Ded is the first woman mystic to preach medieval mysticism in Kashmiri poetry. She used metaphors, riddles and other mediums for her expression.

Like Lal Ded, another mystic poet of Kashmiri language is Nunda Rishi, who is known as Sheikh Nur-ed-Din alias Sahajanand. His father, Salar Sanz was influenced by Sufi Saint Yasman Rishi, who arranged his marriage with Sadar Maji. The child of this couple, Nunda Rishi is the great founder of Rishi line of Kashmir. Jonaraja refers to him as Maha Nurdin-the chief guru of Muslims-but the saint poet always refers to himself only as Nunda. He preached to subdue the five senses and control Kama, Krodha etc. He has given much importance to yogic practice-breath control for communion with God. Nunda Rishi favoured good action which is the secret of happiness in the world. He preached a disciplined life like this:

***Desire is like the knotted wood of the forest
It cannot be made into planks, beams or into cradles;
He who cut and tilled it,
Will burn it into ashes.***

He considered rosary as a snake and favoured true worship:

***Do not go to Sheikh and Priest and Mullah;
Do not feed the cattle or Arkh or leaves;
Do not shut thyself up in mosques or forests;
Enter thine own body with breath controlled in communion with God.***

Rupa Bhawani was the second great mystic poet of 17th century. She had a great and deep experience of ups and downs of life. The worldly sufferings showed her the path of spiritual life. Her spiritual 'Guru' was her father Pandit Madhav Joo Dhar who initiated her into the mysteries and practices of yoga. She gave rich mystic poetry to Kashmiri language. In her poetry, we can find the influence of both Kashmir Shaivism and Islamic Sufism.

***'Selflessness is the sign of the selfless;
Bow down at the door of the selfless.
The selfless are of the highest authority,
The kings of the time and the wearers of the crest and crown.***

These lines show her spiritual understanding. According to her dissolution of self is essential for Realisation. Rupabhawani was a great preacher of yoga. She describes her yogic practice. The different stages of 'yoga' and awakening of Kundalini has been described in the simple language of common men:

***I dashed down into the nether regions and brought the vital breath up;
I got its clue out of earth and stones;
Then my kundalini woke up with nada;
I drank wine by the mouth,
I got the vital breath gathered it within myself;***

This great mystic poetess had experienced the truth and then explained the same. Such mystics had real experience and not a bookish one. That is the reason why this mystic poetry in every language is considered great after so many centuries.

Pt. Mirzakak of eighteenth century was a great mystic poet of Kashmir. I have seen three manuscripts of this poet at Hangalgund which is 13 miles away from tourist resort, Kokarnag. There are some supernatural stories also related to this great poet. According to Mirzakak, 'Brahma' is one and invisible. He is the aim of 'Prani'. According to him 'He' is 'Ram', 'Shyam' and everything. 'His' abode is universe.

**Tas naav Shyama Sunder
Gharu Chhus zagi andar,
Nebar naav voochhi zi andar
Bhajan kar Ram Ramay.**

'Self' and 'Praan' are both Brahma. He creates, nourishes and then becomes Rudra :

**Praan Brahma laagith paida chhum su karan
Praan Vishnu laagith rachan dam ba dam Ram Ram
Praanay Rodur laagith soruy chhum galan
Pran hastoneste pran bood nabood dam ba da Ramay
(Manuscript)**

We can find our goal with 'Omkar' . Mirzakak has given a fine metaphor that Omkar is arrow, worldly man is bow and our target is Brahma.

**Om gav kamanay
Jeev zaan teeray
Nishana Brahma**

Om is real man, Om is the light. It is past, present and future. It is the God of Gods:

Om gav aadi purush

Mysticism is in broader sense as old as man but it is with man in this scientific century also. Pandit Zinda Koul is known as 'Master Ji' in Kashmir. His school is that of Lal Ded, Rupabhawani and Mirzakak. According to Shri B.B. Kachru, he is a mystic by temperament and naturally he could not stand the 'material fret' of his own generations. He sharpened his intellect to reflect the knowledge of truth and dialectical doctrine of Vedanta. Although mysticism was out of tune in the age of 'Master Ji' but the mystic approach is present in his poem. He believes in 'Karma' theory and yearns for salvation. Human salvation is more in the hands of man than in the hands of God. According to Master Ji, God is besides oneself.

**He unknown and unseen
Quietly listens, sitting by.**

This is the basic idea of a mystic who believes in oneness. The poet wants to search 'Him' in another spiritual world:

**Where all have a living faith in God-
One loving Father, Lord of all-
Where ghosts, given and spirits dark
Hold no sway over men's mind.**

For Master Ji God is Love and he wants to understand the world through the lover's eye. In 'Hymn to Love' poem, he describes:

**O Remover of world's darkness.
Thou art the source of light and withal my own true self.
Let me see thee shine in all these modes
Initiate me into the philosophy of atonement.
Remove from me this duality.**

For the poet like Sumitranandan Pant, change is the process of life. Sorrows and happiness are the two sides of this life coin. End is the beginning of the new. In this poem, 'Ah this world ' Master Ji says that one thing alone makes life monotonous, therefore, darkness and light are natural and important:

**If the Lord had not made Death,
If the hell of life were to continue,**

***Providence would not deserve our thanks
We should overwhelm it with complaint.***

For Master Ji the power in man is nothing but 'His' Shakti. One can only face the ups and downs of this world with the grace of God. We get inspiration from that eternal truth which is Supreme. Man is always longing for something unknown but that noble self is manifest in man's own self. Longing for unknown creates mystic attitude for ages.

[Courtesy: Glimpses of Kashmiri Culture, issued by Parmanand Research Centre, Srinagar]

4.0 IN THE ABODE OF SAINTS

J. N. Bhan

The land of Kashyap Rishi standing aloft the northern periphery of the Punyabhumi, called Bharat, has been described as the jewel in the crown of the Indian subcontinent. It is not for nothing, therefore, that Nature has endowed this enchanting land with towering snow-peaks, swinging forests, singing streams, flowery dales and golden meadows - a land of super scenic charms - a heaven on earth. No wonder then that this land of absorbing beauty has, of yore, been the home of gods and goddesses and saints and seers.

As recorded in various works of these seers, Sangamaditya, a "Siddha descended from Sri Kanthanatha, the incarnation of Lord Shiva, in the course of his wanderings reached Kashmir and, bewitched by the sheer harmony of its nature, settled in this land. In the lineage appeared Siddha Somanand, the author of "Shiva Drishti" - the invaluable and pioneering treatise on "Advait Shaiva Darshan". Somananda is said to have been the disciple of Siddha Vasugupta who founded and expounded afresh the "Shaiva Sutras" as revealed to him by the Lord Himself in a dream. Somananda's disciple, Siddha Utpaladeva, elucidated the Advait Darshan in his famous Ishwarapratyabhijnya.

Utpaladeva wrote many other treatises on philosophy and also some devotional poetry of the highest order. After Shri Lakshmanaguptacharya, the illustrious son of Utpala, Shri Abhinavaguptacharya dominated the horizon of philosophical thought. Great Abhinava interpreted and elaborated the basic tenets of the 'Advait Darshan' in his extensive and lucid commentaries on earlier works of his Gurus, and himself wrote original works of the highest order. Hardly anything escaped his masterly pen.

Then came the illustrious disciples of the great seer Abhinava-Shri Khemrajacharya and Shri Yogacharya-who also nourished the vast monistic philosophy with their commentaries as also with their independent works.

This more or less covers the period up to 12th century A.D. in the latter half of which Jayaratha wrote his commentary on Abhinavagupta's great and scholarly work "Trantraloka". Thereafter, due to great political upheavals in Kashmir, nothing is known about the stream of great teachers and seers excepting, of course, the saints like Shivopadhyaya and Siddhas like Lalleshwari, Sheikh Noor-ud-Din-Noorani, Pir Pandit Padshah Mishah, Krishna Kar or Parmanand. Maybe, the historical mist will lift some day to reveal some more luminaries in the line. The link is resumed with the advent of the eighteenth century with Sahib Kaul, Shankar Razdan. Jeewan Sahib and others, recorded and unrecorded in the following pages.

Since his advent in this world, man has tried to understand the why and wherefore of existence. From rudimentary fears and fantasies, he has reached the heights of philosophical thought represented in Shaivism and Vedanta. Without the support of religion or spiritualism, it looks, man would lose his moorings. True religion is in self-realisation and in the basic truth of oneness of man and the Maker.

Over the last few centuries man has been more and more attracted towards materialism. The trend emanated from the West because of the Western religious thought being unable to answer appropriately the queries about the purpose of existence, which arose in people who had acquired a scientific bent of mind. This materialistic trend has engulfed the entire world with disastrous results for the mental health and the physical well-being of mankind. Thoughtful among the scientifically minded people have turned to the Oriental philosophy, particularly Hinduism, for the solution of these spiritual problems and for the treatment of the mind, and

adopted such practices as Yoga and transcendental meditation in various universities and other institutions on a large scale.

In the event, orthodox Western philosophy is by and by dropping its pretense and has come to accept ignorance about certain fundamental experiences. There is increasing interest in the potency of Kundalini and Tantric practices and ancient concepts. There are fascinating possibilities of discovering new dimensions of the psyche which could bring about a revolution in human values. If the nature of the higher consciousness is understood and widely experienced, it could bring about a social transformation of enormous dimensions.

It is an irony that what is being adopted by the Western countries is being abandoned by people in this land. It, of course, is the result of foreign domination more mental than physical which has prevented us from the study and knowledge of our heritage. We have had spiritual leaders who through their Sadhana not only acquired control over themselves but even the elements and their environment. Very few among us know very little about them and their achievements. There is a genuine fear that whatever knowledge there may still be may become extinct sooner than expected if steps are not taken to record the spiritual attainments of our forefathers. There are rare manuscripts, which need to see the light of the day and be researched upon, otherwise they will get lost to posterity.

Source: **Koshur Samachar**

5.0 ACHARYA ABHINAVAGUPTA



Acharya Abhinavagupta

5.1 Acharya Abhinavagupta – Siva incarnate to enlighten the people

Swami Lakshman Joo

Abhinavagupta was one of the most outstanding Acharyas of the Shaiva philosophy. We learn from references about him in *Tantraloka* and *Paratrimshika Vivarana* that he lived in Kashmir about the end of the tenth and the beginning of eleventh centuries A.D. The earliest ancestor of Abhinavagupta was a famous Brahmin, Attrigupta, who lived in Autarvedi, the ancient name of tract of land lying between the Ganga and the Yamuna. Attrigupta, a great Shaiva teacher, was invited by King Lalitaditya, who ruled over Kashmir from 700-736 A.D. A spacious house was soon built by the orders of the king on the banks of the Jhelum (Vitasta) for Attrigupta and a big Jagir was granted to him for his maintenance. Many generations after him, one of his descendants, named Varahagupta, became a great scholar of Shaiva philosophy. His son, Narasimhagupta, alias Chukhala, father of Abhinavagupta, was also a great Shaiva teacher.

5.1.1 Kashmir Shaivism

Abhinavagupta was a great scholar and Shaiva teacher, who possessed knowledge in all matters relating to Kashmir Shaivism. The versatility of this genius was recognised in his own time. He was one of the best authorities on Shaiva philosophy and various branches of Sanskrit

literature. The great Acharya sat at the feet of many teachers for the traditional and authoritative knowledge. Such was his humility and devotion that these teachers imparted to him all the learning they possessed. The celebrated author of Kavya Prakash, Rajanaka Mammatta calls him the Shankaracharya of Kashmir.

5.1.2 Yogic Powers

There are eight great Yogic powers explained in Shastras as follows:

The first is the superhuman power of becoming as small as an atom;

The second is the Yogic power of increasing the size of one's own body at will;

The third is the supernatural power of assuming excessive lightness at will;

The fourth is the superhuman power of obtaining anything desired;

The fifth is the Yogic power of attaining irresistible will;

The sixth is the superhuman power of commanding the whole world;

The seventh Yogic power is to fascinate the whole universe; and

The eighth is to possess unrestrained will viz. whatever he wills comes true.

All these eight Yogic powers were possessed by Acharya Abhinavagupta.

In Malinivijayotara Shastra six great signs of spiritual advancement are explained as follows:

5.1.3 The Six Signs

(1) Unswerving devotional attachment to Shiva; (2) Full attainment of Mantra Siddhi; (3) Attainment of controlling power over all the five elements; (4) Capacity to accomplish the desired end; (5) Mastery over the whole science of rhetoric and poetics; and (6) The sudden dawning of the knowledge of all the Shastras.

These six great spiritual signs also were observed by discerning people in Abhinavagupta and in his time everybody looked upon him as Shiva incarnate.

Kashmir Shaivism is called Trika philosophy. Trika means threefold science of man and his world. This Trika contains the science of (individual), (the energy) and (the universal). The purpose of Trika is to show how an individual rises to the state of universal through energy. The Trika philosophy is classified by Abhinavagupta in four systems which are Krama system, Spanda system, Kula system and Pratyabijnya system.

Abhinavagupta says that Krama deals with space and time. He explains that actually there is no space. When one deals with forms, the space appears. When one is established in formless state of being, for him there is no space. In the same way when there is something to be done, then only the existence of time shines and when you have nothing to do, then time has no existence.

Explaining the Spanda system, Abhinavagupta says that it is that movement which actually is no movement. Spanda makes us realise that whatever is in movement actually is established in unmoved point. So although everything seems moving actually it is not moving at all.

5.1.4 Science of Totality

As for the Kula system, he says that Kula means the Science of Totality. In each and every part of the universe totality shines - throughout. Take a small part of any object. In that part you will see the universal energy existing.

The Pratyabijnya system deals with the school of recognition. Abhinavagupta, while explaining this school of recognition, says;

To make it clear, at the time of God-realization nothing new is realised; on the contrary, the Yogi feels that this state of God-consciousness which he was experiencing was already known to him.

In this school of recognition, Abhinavagupta says, the state of God-consciousness is already there. He comes to the conclusion that in this universe you have to see and realise the Kingdom of God- consciousness only everywhere and nothing else.

Many works have been attributed to Abhinavagupta though only a few are extant. Some of the works of his authorship are:

(1) Bhairavastotra; (2) Malinivijaya Vartika (3) Bharata Natya Shastra-Tika; (4) Dwanmalokalochna; (5) Natyalochana; (6) Purva-Panchika; (7) Gitarthasangraha; (8) Bodha Pancha Dashika; (9) Paramartha Charcha; (10) Dehastha Devatachakrastotra; (11) Paratrimshike Vivarana; (12) Paratrimshika Lagu Vitti; (13) Kramastotra; (14) Ishwara Pratyabijnya-Vimarshini; (15) Ishwar Pratyabijnya Vivriti Vimarshini; (16) Paramartha Sara; (17) Tantraloka; (18) Tantra Sara, etc. Besides these, he wrote many other works. Madhuraja, a devotee of Abhinavagupta, writes that:

Lord Shree-Kantha-Nath Shiva Himself appeared in Kashmir in the form of Abhinavagupta to enlighten the people. Madhuraja also asserts that Abhinavagupta was, in fact, the incarnation of Bhairava-Nath Shiva. In conclusion I would say that Abhinavagupta was the pride of Kashmir. He is even now the pride of Kashmir, as his works and teachings continue to deeply influence the discerning people.

Source: **Koshur Samachar**

5.2 Abhinavagupta - the Philosopher

Prof. K. N. Dhar

Abhinavagupta has been extolled as "Mahamahesvara" by the subsequent Kashmiri authors, his disciples and admirers, which precisely means the "great devotee of Siva", or the "Supreme - Self" in Shaivistic parlance. Kashmiri tradition also is unequivocal in testifying to his versatility. He wrote on philosophy (Saiva-Darshan, commentary on Bhagvad Gita), commented upon Anandavardhan's "Dhvanayloka", Bharata's "Natya Shastra", thus epitomized in himself the diverse talents of a philosopher, rhetorician, and a critic on dramaturgy. Moreover on Ksemendra's testimony, we know that he himself studied literature (Sahitya) with such a learned Guru. His command over rhetorics was so enthralling that Mammatta- the reputed author of 'Kavya Prakash' out of veneration for his erudition in the subject refers to him as "Abhinavagupta Pada ". Pada is added to the names to show great respect. Vamana the propounder of Riti school in Indian Rhetorics and commentator of 'Kavya Prakasha' known as "Bala Bodhini" has alluded to Abhinavagupta as 'an intellectual giant and like a serpent (terror) to his young school - fellows.' This all goes to prove that Abhinavagupta deserves these compliments fully as given to him by the Kashmiri tradition and literary authors as will be shown later. However, in Indian literary tradition two such names have come down to us. The first Abhinavagupta belongs to Kamarupa (Assam) and is a Sakhta- a worshipper of Shakti or Devi. The solitary reference made to him is by one Madhva in his "Shankra Digvijaya," who also wrote a Shanker Bashya, presumably on Badrayan's Vedanta Sutras. He was a contemporary of Sankaracharya who lived according to accepted opinion from 788 to 820 A. D. Abhinavagupta of Assam was in the first instance antagonistic to the monistic theory as

preached by Sankara, but having been defeated in the Shastrartha (interpretation of the sacred lore) became his disciple. The Indologist of Dr. Aufreeht's calibre should not have made such a glaring mistake as to include. "Shaktabhashya" among the works of Abhinavagupta of Kashmir. Perhaps the prefixes "Shakhta" and "Maheshwara" make all the difference between the two and this distinction has been made clear between the two even in very early times.

Abhinavagupta being a conscious artist was not averse to biography. He has given in the colophons of his various works his genealogy and also some dates. It definitely goes to his credit and does not leave us guessing. In his "Paratrimshika Vivarna" he explicitly pens down the name of his earliest ancestor as Atrigupta who was born in Antarvedi - the Doab between the Ganges and the Jamuna. Again in 'Tantraloka' he refers to his sterling qualities of head and heart and being captivated by these was brought to Kashmir- "The crest of Himalayas"- by King Lalitaditya The date of the reign of Lalitaditya is circa 725 - 761. He was also known as Mukhtapida and was eager for conquests.' He defeated the king of Kanauj Yasosvarman and along with the booty brought Atrigupta also to Kashmir. Abhinavagupta goes on to record "In that beautiful city (Srinagar) like that of Kubera's (Alka) in front of the temple of "Sheetanshumauli" (Siva having the moon as his crest) on the Vitasta, the king got built for him a spacious house and also granted a Jagir of land to him. There is a veritable gap of a century and a half between Atrigupta and Abhinavagupta's grand father Varahagupta. In between the two, the author has left the family tree blank for reasons best known to him. Coming direct to the Tantraloka commentary Abhinavagupta explicitly says that his father was Narasinhagupta, popularly known as Chukhulaka and his mother's name was Vimalakala.

Herein we have to refer to the observation made by late Madhusudan Kaul of the Kashmir RP search Department who in his introduction to "Ishvara Pratyabhijna" has erroneously taken Laksmana Gupta as his father. Swami Laksmana Ji also corroborates the other view that Narsimha Gupta was his father. More so, the direct confession of Abhinavagupta as regards his parents and their names leaves nothing to argue about. Laksmana Gupta was definitely one of the preceptors of Abhinavagupta who initiated him into the Pratyabhijna Shastra as acknowledged by him in his introduction to Ishvara Pratyabhijna Vivriti Vimarshini in the words:

<verses>

(Sri Laksamna Gupta showed me the path to Pratyabhijna theory (recognition)).

The silence of Kalhana about Abhinavagupta as such is intriguing - he mentions three "Abhinavas" in his Raja-Tarangini and the suffix "Gupta" he has not appended with any of these. The first 'Abhinava' is a "Divira" or a scribe,' the second foster - brother of Kayyamantaka in the reign of Samgramaraja and the third a Damaraj a landed - aristocrat. No where the name of Abhinavagupta appears as a scholar of repute or a Saiva; whereas he has at times referred to such names as Muktakana, Shivasvamin, Anandavardhana and Ratnakara etc. It may be argued that our author was more after learning than after the favour of kings, hence was not attached to any court. Consequently Kalhana, whose forte being the description of kings, skips over him. However, the fame which Abhinavagupta acquired during his life time and even after could not have eluded the chronicler Kalhana. He could not ignore the powerful Kashmiri tradition. While mentioning Ananda Vardhana the name of Abhinavagupta would have been a natural corollary being his commentator. Subsequent research in this behalf might throw some light on this omission. About his date or probable years in which he lived, he has bequeathed to us some keys which if properly used, can unlock this bane of Indian date - keeping most easily. In the last verse of "Brhati Vimarsini" he states that he finished this assignment in the 90th year when 4115 years of Kaliyuga had elapsed; by deducting 25 years from the Kali era. the local or Saptarsi era can be found. It works at 4090th year of the Saptarsi Calendar, and the word "Navatitame" used by him in that verse corresponds to 90th year of 4000 Kali era. Even, we at present write down only 74 when actually it is 1974 - seventy fourth year of 1900 Christian era.

Again in one of his Stotras which is called "Bhairavastava" in the last verse he gives the date and his name also:

<verses>

"Abhinavagupta composed this Stava (eulogy) on the 10th of dark fortnight in the month of Pausha in the year Vasu (8) Rasa (6)."

(In Sanskrit the digits are read from the left), hence it comes to 68. It is definitely the 68th year of the Saptarsi Samvat 4000 as shown above. Moreover, in his Kramastotra he again refers to date as:

<verses>

"In the 66th year, on the ninth day of dark fortnight, I, Abhinavagupta, in the month of Maghar, praised Lord Siva".

So it can safely be inferred that Abhinavagupta's literary period extended from 4066 to 4090 laukika or Saptarsi era corresponding to 990-1015 A. D. Even though we have tried to locate the period, but at the same time we are not sure that Kramastotra is his first work. It is to be remembered in this context that Abhinavagupta having written a host of books, the chronological order of his works cannot be arranged without any effort, but those which have no date or have not been referred to by the subsequent authors will defeat any such solution. In this way we can safely say that "Kramastotra" might not be his first composition, it might be pushed back to two decades at least, as in the chronological order fixed by Dr. K. C. Pandey this Stotra stands at No. 13. Hence we might safely assume that his literary career commenced from 970 A. D. According to his own testimony he adopted many Gurus for pursuing knowledge in different fields and even went outside Kashmir, presumably to Jalandhar to find a Guru "Shambo Nath" there. The years of initiation after which maturity dawned on him might be taken not less than 30 years, after which, confidence was gained by him to write independently. Hence we might place his birth near about 940- A. D. He might have lived even beyond 1015 A. D. and the veracity of the tradition prevalent in Kashmir to this day, that he entered a cave while reciting the Bhairavastava alongwith 1200 disciples, and was never seen again cannot be doubted. This cave, alleged to have received the mortal frame of Abhinavagupta, is situated at "Birwa" village some five miles from Magam on the Gulmarg range.

The thirst for knowledge in our author was insatiable. A bevy of Gurus was adopted by him for this purpose. According to his own statement he read at the feet of :

Subject

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Narasimha Gupta (His father). | Grammar. |
| 2. Vainanatha. | Dvaitadvaita Tantras. |
| 3. Bhuti Rajatanaya. | Daulistic Saivism |
| 4. Bhuti Raja. | Brahma- Vidya. |
| 5. Laksmanagupta. | Pratyabhijna. |
| 6. Indu Raja. | Dhvani. |

7. Bhatta Tota.

Dramaturgy

He had other Gurus also but the subjects have not been specified in their cases. From all his compositions at least 19 such preceptors can be gleaned.

As will be said later, the 10th and 11th centuries in Kashmiri literary lore have been a landmark. The influence of religion has been pronounced. A climate of religions renaissance was ushered in and many stalwarts like Anandavardhana, Vamana, Ksemendra, Bilhana, Kalhana and last but not the least Abhinavagupta contributed himself in making the sanskrit literary tradition richer and all the more diverse, in as much as, the subjects like rhetories, dramaturgy, poetry, history and philosophy, were treated in an admirable way. So, it can be of value to learn that the whole family of Abhinavagupta was renowned for its unique literary bent of mind. His uncle Vamana Gupta was an expert in poetics and he initiated our author into this field. In the Abhinava Bharati Abhinavagupta quotes him and is also included in the list of his teachers. His younger brother Manoratha was admitted to the discipleship of his brother-Abhinava gupta- perhaps he was first in that order. His five cousins Ksema, Utpala, Abhinava, Chakra and Padamgupta were also very well-read. If Ksema be identified with Ksema Raja the Author of Spanda-Nirnaya and other treatises on Shaivism, then the scholarship of his cousin is beyond doubt. It need not be reiterated that his father Narasimhagupta possessed intellectual calibre of highest order and was proficient in all the Shastras and a great devotee of Shiva. In this atmosphere of devotion and learning par excellence, Abhinava Gupta was mentally groomed to undertake the stupendous task awaiting him.

So, it is not surprising to find that "Jayaratha" alludes to his being 'Yoginibhu', that his parents while uniting for his birth rose above all worldly desires and identified themselves with Shiva and Shakti. The offspring thus born called Yoginibhu, is looked upon as a fit vehicle for propounding and propagating Shaivistic Monism.

Not only this, Abhinavagupta has been called a Bhairava incarnate by the commentator of Parmartha-Sara; "Yoga - Raja," while commenting on the last line of this treatise:

<verses>

has explained this epithet at length. So the traditional belief amongst the Kashmiri Pandits that Abhinavagupta was a living Bhairava in human form is not without basis.

Now we come to the place of his mental activity. From his own authority we learn that Lalitaditya had got built a palatial house for Atrigupta when he carried him along from Antarvedi to Kashmir (quoted earlier). The house was built on the banks of Vitasta. However, in one of the MSSs of Tantraloka belonging to Late Pt. Maheshwar Razdan there is a different reading as <sanskrit> meaning "at the head of Vitasta" i.e. the source. However, in the quotation is used the pronoun <sanskrit> (in) agreeing with <sanskrit> (Srinagar) hence this <sanskrit> seems to be an interpolation.

In the first verse on the Vartika on "Malini Vijaya" it has been specifically laid down:

<verses>

"The Kashmirian Abhinavagupta is the East of the city known as Pravarapura (Srinagar) composed the Vartika on the very first verse of "Malinivijaya".

From this it is clear that Srinagar was divided into several zones then - East, West etc. and in the East Zone our author lived; but nothing can be said whether this was his ancestral home or an acquired house. However, there is a reference in the Tantraloka of his having shifted to another city at the request of one of his disciples Mandra:

<verses>

"Mandra in order to save him (Abhinavagupta) from distraction requested him to shift to his beautiful city."

It is also clear from this, that this earlier house must have been located in a very busy centre of the city, so was not suitable for his calm composure and undivided attention, so necessary for the delineation of such a terse and delicate subject as philosophy.

On the authority of Kalhana we know that Lalitaditya had built three more cities in the outskirts of Pravarapura Srinagar. The one Parihasapura and the other Lali'pura and the third Lokapunya. However, the former was meant as a respite for the war-worn king and all the amenities of Parihasa (enjoyment) were provided there: Hence it could not be a quiet city. The latter was not taken kindly to by the king as it was built by his architect in his absence, hence it must have been comparatively deserted and all the same calmer. It might be surmised that Mandra lived there and invited his Guru to that very city for being quieter and far from the madding crowds, so that his "distraction could be averted". The third city along with a cluster of villages was given in offering to Vishnu.

Even though Abhinavagupta lived during the span of 940 - 1015 A. D. but no city worth the name was founded by the kings during this period. Although he saw the reigns of Yashaskara, Samgrama Deva, Ksema Gupta, Didda and Samgrama Raja, yet the cities founded by Lalitaditya still found favour with the people. Even though one century and a half had elapsed, the twin cities of Parihasapura and Lalitpura had not fallen into oblivion. In the reign of Samgrama Raja (1003 - 1028 A. D.) the Brahmins of Parihasapura started a fast to bring down the fall of Tunga his Prime Minister. This allusion to the city nearly two hundred years after it was founded, testifies to its being very important at that time and might have been the royal capital even.

Before an attempt is made to pen down the contribution of Abhinavagupta to Shaivism, it will be more appropriate to trace the origin of Siva worship in Kashmir. Perhaps as a corollary to this, we shall have to furnish at least the rough contours on which the earliest religion of Kashmiris was based.

The most ancient book on Kashmir History 'Nilamata Purana' specifically lays down that Shiva and His Shakti were propitiated at that time, but other deities such as Ganesha, Puranic gods, Vedic pantheon and even Buddha (as an Avatara) were not ignored. This fact without any doubt proves that earliest Kashmiri religion was polytheistic in content and character, but the worship of Shiva and His consort Parvati had an edge over all other gods. Not only this, the aboriginal deities like Nikumbha etc. were also owned. On the same subject S. C. Ray observes, "that the earliest inhabitants of Kashmir probably cherished some aboriginal beliefs. In the third century B. C. Buddhism seems to have made some headway in Kashmir. Among Hindu gods Shiva either originated or entered the valley some time before the faith of the Shakya prince.

In this connection the word "Naga used to describe the people of Kashmir, did drop a hint as to its being related to Snake - worship. But word "Naga" in Sanskrit does not mean snake only, it is synonymous with a semi-divine being a cruel person, an elephant or a cloud also. However, Shiva's association with the religion of Kashmir did provide a context for translating "Naga" as a serpent, as it is worn by the Lord around His neck. In this connection H. H. Wilson remarks, "originally, no doubt, it (the religion of Kashmir) was opulente or snake-worship, but this is a part of the Hindu ritual and the Nagas are included in the orthodox pantheon" So it is abundantly clear that the ancient religion of Kashmir was an amalgam of the "new" as preached by Kashyapa and the old - that of the aboriginals whose king was Nikumbha. Even though other gods were also worshiped, the emphasis on Shiva and His Shakti was pronounced. The influence of Buddhism as such in those times was not worth mentioning, since it was only being adopted by the land then, and after some time did give a fillip to the philosophical ramblings which reigned supreme for near about two centuries in Kashmir.

Kalhana has copiously furnished us the proof that Buddhism and orthodox creeds of Shiva and Visnu co-existed in a most tolerant manner here. Whenever any endowment is made for religious purposes, or a Stupa or a Vihara is constructed, the individual or the king, or his members of the family or his Minister with equal zeal and faith constructed shrines of Shiva and Vishnu also.

However, this climate of accommodation between the two faiths - Hinduism and Buddhism was disturbed by the advent of Nagarjuna on the Kashmir scene. He lived at Shadarhatvana (modern Harwan) and took preaching of Buddhism in right earnest. This provoked the "orthodoxy". Insult was added to the injury by King Kanishka (125-60 A.D) who encouraged the propagation of the Buddhistic teachings and gave it royal patronage. Kalhana while recording all this has to say: "After defeating in disputations all learned opponents (Nagarjuna), these enemies of tradition brought to an end etc. the observance of the rites prescribed in the Nilamata." This was a veritable revolt against the established faith of the land and the astute Brahmin lost no opportunity in providing a more palatable alternative to Buddhistic tenets - which may well be called the seeds of Shaivism which sprouted forth in full bloom later.

Perhaps this pre-supposes the give and take which must have preceded before Buddhism went into oblivion in Kashmir. The most potent cause for its decline was that the Shaivism fought on its own ground and assimilated such tenets which were finding favour with the people. Thus the Shaivas on account of their exceptional erudition did provide such a faith to people which though new, was not at all alien. It respected orthodoxy but at the same time did not abhor the "new". A compromise between the two did the trick and Buddhism had to eat the humble pie.

Moreover, the versatile Brahmin of Kashmir did not stop to lick his wounds inflicted by Buddhist propagation, but like a seasoned general attacked its weakest point i. e. the silence about God. Indians at large and a Kashmiri especially, are a God-fearing nation, hence the Shaivite knowing full well this credulity of a Kashmiri, transplanted God again in their faith by naming it Paramshiva or Sadashiva with its antecedent - the Para Shakti. In all the treatises on Shaivism hair-splitting arguments are laid down in proving the existence of the "Supreme Soul". Hence the Buddhists had to take up to their heels in the absence of any powerful counter-argument on this subject. Perhaps the people in general, also became skeptic about their faith, because their belief in God is skin-deep. This has actually permeated their marrow even. They could consequently not reconcile themselves with more or less "Godless" faith. The adage "Had there been no God, Man would have invented one" was proved to the hilt in Kashmir. Herein it will be of interest to mention that Shankaracharya's visit to Kashmir acted as the last nail in the Buddhist coffin.

Shankara after his unparalleled victory over the Buddhists in plains came to Kashmir sometime about the second decade of the 9th century. Even though no other reference regarding his visit to Kashmir has been traced as yet, the popular tradition corroborates its authenticity. This cannot be dismissed cheaply, in as much as, that on the perusal of Shankra's treatises it becomes patently clear that his compositions did influence the Kashmiri Saiva literature; more so his imprint on Pratyabhijna (theory of recognition) is obviously discerned. In his "Dakhshina Murti Stotra" commented upon by his pupil Sureshvaracharya the conception of ultimate reality as preached by him and known as Tantric philosophy and that expounded in Pratyabhijna seems to be the same. Not only this, even some technical terms as used in Pratyabhijna have been earlier used by him in the same sense:

(1)

<verses>

(Dakhshina Murti Stotra Commentary (2), 13)

(2)

<verses>

(Ishwara Pratyabhijna Vimarshini- 1, 39)

Translation: (i) " The universe has been created out of knowledge and action and seems also possessed of consciousness."

Translation (ii) " Knowledge and action are considered the source of all living beings."

(1)

<verses>

(Dakshina Murti Stotra Commentary (2), 13)

(2)

<verses>

(Ishwara Pratyabhijna Vimarshini 1, 207)

Translation (i) "Therefore, that shining spirit follows everywhere the opposite direction (beyond time and space)."

Translation (ii) " The shining supreme spirit is not bound by space and time."

Such examples can be multiplied and so the internal evidence culled from the compositions of Shankara regarding his coming to Kashmir and subsequently not only the thought but even the expressions being found common in both (as above), it may be safely inferred that he did come to Kashmir and had presumably discussions with the propounders of Shaiva faith here. On a profound perusal of his "Saundarya Lahari" it becomes lucid that he got influenced also by Kashmirian Shaiva Acharyas and did concede the existence of monistic Tantras and also their number:

<verses>

(Saundaraya Lahari)

Translation: (O Devi), You having built the whole universe with sixty four Tantras.....

Hence we come to the stage when Buddhism being banished, the vacuum thus created began to be filled by the Acharayas of Saivism who had the blessings of Shankaracharya also.

However, the Buddhists definitely earn credit for initiating the modus operandi of discussions, symposia and religious congregations for propagating their philosophy and projecting this to the masses. We have references of Buddhist councils being held here in Ashoka's and Kanishka's time. In this connection Dr. R. K. Kaw has to say "It will be observed that Buddhists initiated a critical view in matters which were so far believed only as gospel truths." Hence as a reaction to this, the Brahmin votaries of Shiva and Shakti also inducted into their cult the method of philosophical reasoning and persuasive argumentation. "Shaiva Literature" is fully replete with these two ingredients.

The whole of Shaiva literature comes under the name of Trika, Trikashastra or Trikashasana. The derivation of the epithet "Trika" among other things can be ascribed to triple principle with which this system deals e. g. Shiva, Shakti, Anu; Pati, Pasha and Pashu; Nara, Shakti and Shiva; Para and Aparā. and Parapara and finally Bheda, Abheda; Bheda, and Abehda; or it may have been called as such, "For the reason that its chief authority is the the triad consisting of three chief Agamas - Siddha, Namaka, and Malini. This literature falls into three categories:

The Agama - Shastra.

The Spanda - Shastra.

Pratyabhijna - Shastra.

"The Agamas are believed to be revelations, having come down through ages." These emphasize the doctrine of Jnana (knowledge) and Kriya (action) for becoming one with the superself.

The most important composition of this branch are the "Shiva Sutras." Their authorship is attributed to Lord Shiva and were in course of time revealed to Sage Vasugupta. On the authority of Raja Tarangini we know that Bhatta Kallata, the pupil of Vasugupta lived in the reign of Avanti Varman (855- 883 A. D.)

Hence it is clear that Vasugupta whose reputation was established as a Shaiva teacher must have preceded him at least by 30 years if not more i.e. 825 A. D. The purpose of writing this thesis (or communicating it as the tradition goes) was to counteract the dualistic teachings in vogue at that time. In Shivasutra Vimarshini by Kshema Raja, it is clearly laid down:

<verses>

" The occult school (of Saiva) may not get into oblivion by the preaching of duality amongst the people - with this purpose."

So the Agamas taught the pure non-dualistic Monism.

The Spandashastra actually amplifies the main principles of shaivism in greater detail than the Shiva-Sutras. The main treatise on this Shastra is Spanda Sutras or Karikas which have been commented upon by Kallata, Ramakantha, Utpalavaishnava (Not of Shaiva School) and Kshema Raja. The content of philosophical reasoning is missing in the main treatise, while the commentators have tried to supply it with meaningful success. Kshema Raja in his commentary ascribes to Vasugupta the authorship of this Shastra also. But Utpala (Vaishnava) uses the unambiguous phrase while commenting on the very first Sutra in his Pradipika. He gives it as "Sangraha- granthakrta" meaning "a work which gathers together the meaning of Shiva Sutras." In one of his verses he attributes its authorship to Bhatta Kallata via Vasu Gupta. But this verse is not found in the recension of Kshema Raja. However, it is to make clear that contents being the same in Shiva-Sutras and Spanda Sutras the authorship could not be different. As the Shiva-Sutras have been revealed to Vasu Gupta, hence Spanda Shastra may also be his acquisition.

The word "Spanda" as prefixed with this branch of Trika means "a throb", "quivering" or "movement." The quivering of the mind receives the beautitude of the "Super soul" and hence attains the "Nishkampa Pradipa" unquivering flame of the lamp as given in Bhagvad Gita, or the name to this treatise may be explained as the "throbs of Lord Shiva" clothed in words by later Yogis and Siddhas such as Vasugupta etc.

The third and the most important school of Shaivadarshan is the Pratyabhijna cult with which our author is directly concerned. Somananda is said to be the originator of this branch and has been called as "Tarkasya Karta" meaning the founder of reasoning". He was a pioneer in grafting the element of argument reasoning, support and refutations on rational lines into this system. The first book of this system is "Shiva Drishti" whose authorship is attributed to Soma Nanda. Unfortunately this masterly treatise is now extant up to four Ahnikas (Chapters) only; at least it had seven as is clearly quoted by Abhinavagupta in Para- Trimsika. Perhaps this is the main reason as to why his erudite commentator Utpaladeva does not go beyond 74th verse of the IV Ahnika. Subsequently the three chapters were salvaged and the number made seven; but it seems that these form a part of the Vrtti (gloss) compiled by Somananda himself and not the original one. The "Forte" of Somananda's teaching is:

<verses>

"Shiva" the auspicious and Supreme soul, is the giver and he is the enjoyer. This whole universe is (permeated by) Shiva."

His disciple and at times taken to be his son also. Utpaladeva commented in a most scholastic manner on the "Shiva Drishti" of Soma Nanda, and for the first time introduced the element of Pratyabhijna in Shaiva literature. He named his treatise, though based on the doctrine taught by Somananda as "Ishwara Pratyabhijna-Karikas" in Sutra form consisting of four Adhikaras (cantos), further sub-divided into a number of Ahnikas or sections. He also propounded "Svatantriya" theory of his own, independent of his Guru Somananda. By Svatantriya he means the "self dependent power of the lord". His exposition of the "Recognition Doctrine" has the sanctity and the authority what it should have deserved, and was even equated with Somananda the originator as:

<verses>

"Reflection of the wisdom of Somananda" (Ishwara Pratyabhijna Vimarshini - 2, introduction)

Perhaps being very much enamored by the wisdom of Utpaladeva, Abhinavagupta composed the shorter and longer versions of his commentary on the Ishwara Pratyabhijna of Utpala; who discarding all other names for this system anointed it with Pratyabhijna - recognition. This name alone has stood the test of time and is perhaps synonymous with Trika as a whole; while in, essence this is not the case.

The order of Gurus (Guru Parampara) as given in Shaiva Darshani's as follows:

<verses>

"I bow to Lord Shiva, Vasugupta, Somananda, and Utpalacharaya, Lakshmana (Gupta), Abhinavagupta and Kshema Raja."

A faint echo of teacher-taught relation can also be heard into it. Vasugupta pupil of Lord Shiva, Somananda pupil of Vasugupta, Utpala pupil of Soma Nanda, Abhinavagupta pupil of Lakshmanagupta and Kshemaraja the pupil of Abhinavagupta. Had both Vasugupta and Somananda been the pupils of Lord, then the insertion of "Cha" would have made it clear.

From this it is clear that Vasugupta and Somananda represent the originators through the good offices of Lord Shiva while Utpala, Lakshmanagupta, Abhinavagupta and Kshemaraja constitute the heirs to this system, who in their own way interpreted, supplemented and enriched the word sent to the humanity by Lord Shiva through the first two Gurus.

Out of a host of such interpreters Abhinavagupta is not only the best but also possessed of multifaceted genius. Not confining himself to the ramifications of "Saiva Darshan" he also strayed into the domain of Rhetorics by subscribing to Rasa theory in his commentary on Bharata Natya Shastra, and also into poetics when elucidating the "Dhvani" as enunciated by Ananda Vardhana. However, we have to delimit his versatility and shall describe him only as a religious philosopher.

However, before embarking upon this, it will not be out of place to give roughly the main characteristics of this "Darshan" so that in light of these, we might determine the place of Abhinavagupta as a philosopher; as to how he explained these and for sooth, even improved upon these.

The " Saiva Shasana" starts with the assumption that Atman is the real and innermost self in everything. It does not undergo any change and is a vehicle to experience the "Parameshwara" or the Chaitanayam. This "Parameshwara" or Param Shiva" is not bound by time, space and

form, so is omnipotent and omnipresent. However, He has a dual role - the one which pervades whole of the universe and the other transcendental in which he defeats all manifestations. His power of pervading the universe is called Shakti, but coming out of His fountain-head is only an aspect of His and not in any way different from Him. Even though these Energies or powers have been called numerous, yet only five are the most notable. The Chita Shakti (the power of resplendence), Ananda Shakti (the power of bliss), Ichha Shakti (the power of desire), Jnana Shakti (the power of knowledge), and the Kriya Shakti (the power of action), with the help of these, the "Paramshiva" manifests itself which in Saiva language is called Udaya, Unmesha, Abhasa or Srishti.

However, to create a universe is the necessity even though He is world-incarnate. Hence the universe has been thought to be composed of "Shiva Tattva (pure, auspicious element), Shakti Tattva (potential element), Sadakhya Tattva (the element of self realisation, or being), Aishwaraya Tattva (element of identification) and last but not the least the Sad-Vidya Tattva (the element of true perception). When in between the self and self-realization, Maya (obduration, delusion) obscures the real form of objects, the Sadhaka (experiencer) has to rise above Kala (time), Niyati (sequence), Raga (attachment), Vidya (limited perception of consciousness), Kala (limited authorship). Such an experiencer who has been doped by Maya and is obsessed with time etc. is called "Purusha". Simultaneously with it is also born Prakritis, that latent power in him which goads him onto act or react. To awake from the slumber under the influence of Maya, the Purusha conjointly with Prakriti has to undergo some mental drill and comprehend the implication of Buddhi (conception), Ahanakara (personal I or ego) and Manas (desire). Taken in reverse order, the desire actuates "I" ness and at the last stage conception of things becomes clear. Hence the Purusha awakes by rejecting Maya and its five concomitants beginning with Time (Kala) etc, comes face to face with chitswaroopam resplendence or Shambhavi state and attains the Paramaishwarya or Self-dependence (Supreme bliss). This is the purport of Shaiva Darshan or Shaiva Monism as given in the "Shiva Sutra" and "Shiva Drishiti" on broad lines.

Dr. K.C. Pandey has given a long list of some 41 compositions attributed to Abhinavagupta. Among these some bear dates, some are referred to by subsequent authors and some have been owned by tradition. However, the most famous works of his on "Shaiva darshan", strictly speaking are:

Para - Trimshika Vivarna.

Pratyabhijna Vimarshini (expurgated)

Pratyabhijna Vivriti Vimarshini (full)

Tantrasara

Tantraloka

Parmarthasara

Commentary on Bhagvadgita called Gitartha-Sangraha.

Many other compositions of his such as "Shiva Drishtyalocana" commentary on "Shiva Drishti" as the name clearly signifies, is lost.

Chronologically speaking the "Para Trimshika" seems to be his first work in the "Shaiva Lore". It is in reality composed of the concluding portion of "Rudrayamala Tantra" belonging to Agama school on which Abhinavagupta penned down a commentary calling it Vivarna. However, the title of the book suggests it containing thirty verses only (Trimshika), but it has even more than

these. There seems to be some confusion amongst the later commentators regarding its name, while the author himself has tried to justify it like this:

"Trimshika" is so called because it is the Supreme Lord of three powers desire, knowledge, and action."

<verses>

'Para' in Shiava terminology is identical with 'Parasamvid' - the highest power of Self-Dependence. Hence 'Para Trimshika' would connote 'thirty verses of Self-Dependence', or the Super Lord of the triple formula of desire, knowledge, and action.

Pratyabhijnavimarshini and its larger edition Viviriti belong to the Pratyabhijna (recognition) school of Shaiva Shastra as propounded by Utpala Deva and originated by Somananda.

Tantrasara and Tantraloka deal with the same contents with the difference that the former is a brief Summary (Sara) of the latter, a voluminous treatise. The Tantrasara is couched in prose while the Tantraloka is in metrical form. These are definitely based on Malini Vijayatantra belonging to Agama school.

Parmarthsara is a philosophical composition of 105 verses and is supposed to be based on the Karikas of Shesha. In his Gitarthasangraha, Abhinavagupta has emphatically declared that freedom from all miseries can be obtained by seeing Him (Paramshiva) in everything and everywhere. This freedom cannot be achieved by renunciation of the world. The battle between Pandvas and Kaurvas is actually the race between Vidya (knowledge, perception) and Avidya (ignorance, blurred perception).

From the above it is clear that Abhinavagupta not only explained Pratyabhijna on which his fame rests, but also other Tantric works belonging to different schools. He did not believe in isolation but in collation which is the keynote of his philosophic bent of mind. Other commentators like Utpala, Kshemaraja etc. confined themselves to a single path but Abhinavagupta not only rode on other paths but also proved the old adage "All roads lead to Rome." He made a compromise between different views and presented such a philosophy of life which never grew stale. His synthesis - oriented approach to life gave a meaningful and healthy direction to his ideas.

Philosophy, strictly speaking, is the science of knowledge or the Tattva Vidya, the lore of the real nature of human soul or material world as being identified with the supreme spirit. Since knowledge emanates from Him, hence it can be usefully used as a medium to interpret Him. If there be no originality and no Shaivacharya has claimed it, since "Shivasutras" are the word of God, the originality definitely lies in interpreting these and unraveling the esoteric content in a most intelligible and homely idiom. In this field also Abhinavagupta has no parallel.

It is also to be remembered that our author does not rest his oars on the philosophic polemics, but also connects these with the ritual. Herein also he shows a master - mind in fitting ritual with philosophy, the mundane with the spirit, the real with the ideal and to crown all practice with the precept. On account of his versatile genius he is at home in explaining the abstract in the context of the concrete. While reveling in the super world he does not forget the world as such. He is not a dreamer but an awake artist feeling rightly the pulse of supersensuousness but at the same time not forgetting the converse form of it. He tries to explore the obverse and the converse at the same time. Hence his treatment of the subject is more realistic. Perhaps that is the main reason as to why pratyabhijna school though bequeathed to him by earlier Acharyas was actually made popular by him. He not only translated the terse philosophy in the tongue of the people but also gave it the most natural direction. Abhinavagupta does not claim any originality for introducing this "Shaiva Darshan", but most candidly records:

<verses>

"Having thought over the views of Shri Somananda, I systematized these."

Moreover, in the realm of philosophy, originality is a misnomer; because the philosophy as such is the cumulative thinking processed through ages and then finding expression through the pen or mouth of an erudite scholar. Even Shankara without mincing words, categorically states that the authenticity of a system is to be tested on the touchstone of Vedas. Somananda, the originator of Pratyabhijna school admits that his "Shaivadrishi" is based on Shastras, though his pupil Utpalacharya testifies to its showing new path for final emancipation. In all humility (because true knowledge bestows humility) Abhinavagupta follows the same tradition of thinking.

It may be contended that he did not compose any treatise independently, but only commented upon the works of his predecessors. Therefore he can be a commentator at best, but not an original thinker. Commentary from Abhinavagupta's view point is not merely a jugglery of words but actually the personal experience gained through spiritual experiments. He lived the maxims on which he commented. So in the exposition of such matters he sets for himself three norms - first being the personal experience, reason the second, and ancient authority the third. So the contribution of Abhinavagupta to this system of philosophy is not simply of academic interest but is replete with other dimensions of thinking which even the originators failed to comprehend. The commentators preceding him gave mere dogmatic statements of the basic tenets of the Spanda school. They dared not subtract or add to these by way of argument, reasoning and judicious explanation for or against the fundamental principles. Even though some commentators notably Utpalacharya did introduce the element of argument into it, but his domain was only one - sided related to Pratyabhijna only and not the "Trika" as a whole. Abhinavagupta on the contrary did improve on him, though being his disciple, making it broad-based and embracing the whole gamut of Shaiva Shastra. He provided rational base to it and also dwelt on the ritualistic aspect of this system. He has exhaustively explained the Monistic Shaiva rituals also. He made a happy blend of philosophy and psychology, quoted extensively from the Agamas and other established authorities; perhaps he has every right to assert:

<verses>

"I (we) will unravel the "unseen" at the bidding of my Guru and Lord."

This verse does allude to the shortcomings of the earlier commentators who could not convert <sanskrit> (unseen) into <sanskrit> (seen) and so it was left to Abhinavagupta to perceive it in light perspective and accordingly transmit it to others through his writings - commentaries. His scathing criticism of Buddhists and schools of philosophy other than Shaiva with biting wit and pungent sarcasm is perhaps the most original content of what he has written.

His brief yet most pregnant definition of "Trika" definitely portrays his mastery over this system:

<verses>

"The unison of Shiva (Paramashiva) and "Shakti" (Para Shakti) is termed as supertrika".

Very succinctly he also lays down the aim of this Shastra - "The removal of veil of ignorance." However, the fundamental difference between the Vedanta and Shaivism though professing the same aim, is real rather than apparent. In Vedanta the negation of the facts of experience are a must presupposition for realization of the self; The illusion regarding the snake and rope is quite known. But in Trika there is no negative approach towards the universe but in fact an affirmation of the facts of experience with new interpretation. With this positive understanding of the environs, the realizer is simply face to face with self-recognition which in Shaiva-terminology is called self-realization.

While dealing with Pratyabhijna (self-recognition) Guru Somananda defines it as the two fold function of perception and remembrance in its totality at the same time. Utpala Deva thinks that the term Pratyabhijna connotes, the power of self, the power of cognition and power of action - a triple amalgam:

<verses>

In this realm also Abhinavagupta shows his originality in defining the term "Pratyabhijna" as:

<verses>

"Recognition of that supreme self is to be face to face with what was forgotten through effulgence (of consciousness).

While explaining the word Pratipam he very lucidly says that " (it) means that which was forgotten, or concealed but now coming into view not through remembrance but by clear cognition."

Furthermore to make it more lucid, Abhinavagupta explains that cognition is composed of:

<verses>

"When the past perception and the present perception are revived (by the object coming in full view) "

<verses>

Giving an example of past perception and present perception and their getting revived he says:

<verses>

"He is that very Chaitra" (name of a person, who was already seen before). His coming face to face now is called present perception and his cognition (that he is really the same person) was done by the previous or past perception, the bridge between the perceptions being remembrance born of mental impression. Our author's independent thinking can very easily be inferred from an ingenious definition of Pratyabhijna.

Herein he does not follow his preceptor but provides a very homely definition, when he says that the Lord is possessed of Infinite Powers. This characteristic of Him is corroborated extensively by Puranas, Siddhantas and Agamas as also by reasoning and inference etc. When by direct experience we ascertain His Nature in our own self, this may be termed as having recognized Him, or in other words, the cognition takes place.

Abhinavagupta does not consider remembrance the only vehicle of identifying the present perception with the past one. Even though Somananda explicitly lays down the role of remembrance in connecting the present and past perception and Utpala also endorses it; Abhinavagupta comments:

<verses>

"But being face to face and not by remembering alone, the knowledge (perception) because of being made clear, Recognition takes place."

He very cogently argues that remembrance is related to sight; first having seen a certain object we are reminded of it when some such form crosses our eyes. But there are cases of falling in love without seeing each other, wherein the medium of arousing love and accepting the lover from the depths of heart is confined to "either the words of female messenger or confidante or the perception of such traits in him (as being her ideal) or by any other deeds which made him renowned, she is persuaded to accept him". Here in this case sight has played no part, hence the image which first sight would have caught cannot be repeated at the subsequent sights. The

remembrance is altogether absent in it. The master philosopher goes on to argue that in this case the love-lorn lady naturally weaves the pictures of his beauty, gallantry or any other exceptional distinction on the authority of three sources mentioned above. This picture will definitely be at variance with the one if the lover meets her incognito. There is no repetition of image as in the case of "Chaitra" (given earlier), how will the recognition take place? Abhinavagupta raising the controversy himself provides a most plausible answer to this predicament. When incognito hero is introduced as lover whom she has been loving for his qualities all along, the heroine receives a shock instead of joy. As long as the qualities of the hero are not revealed to her and she certifies these by her own experience and also on the authenticity of others. "He is that very person" the recognition is not so simple and easy. Hence the obstruction between what has been heard and what is actually seen is to be removed, so that the identification between the "imaginary" and the "real" is possible. Thus at this juncture the recognition is possible only by the removal of the veil as also the reconciliation between both the mental images one imaginary or unseen and the other seen or face to face. Accordingly Abhinavagupta supplements the remembrance (smaran) with (anubhav) cognition derived from personal observation or experience. On the seeming contradiction between unity and plurality, Utpaladeva contends that:

<verses>

"The internal reality of things of diverse nature is unity".

<verses>

"that very unity attaining the knowledge or perception of senses."

<verses>

"gets multiplied under the influence of time, space and real nature of objects." Like an original thinker Abhinavagupta makes it more clear and simple by saying:

<verses>

"The cause or no cause are one and same, so unity and plurality can be the attributes of one and same object."

<verses>

"So, in essence the objects internally are one consciousness, but practically speaking as being differentiated by the blue and yellow (colours) unchangeable indeterminate or determinate imply multiplicity externally at the illusionary level."

It will be pertinent here to allude to the aim of the system of philosophy as preached by Abhinavagupta. The unavoidable preamble to every philosophic thought is to describe the why and what of that what teacher or preacher wishes us to know. In the treatment of this subject Abhinavagupta set norms of personal experience, reasoning and thirdly the scripture and in the context of these he tries to explain the domain of his experience. Herein he exhibits a marvelous sense of independent judgment. He does not accept the theories of Logicians is given in Nyaya Shastra, of as expounded in Vaishesika in details or fundamentals. From the dualism of Sankhya, idealism of Baudhas and monism of Vedanta he only differs mostly in fundamentals. According to him the world of experience is not God-made nor a portion of Prakriti (Sankhya) nor purely a subjective experience (Baudhas), nor even a mere illusion (Vedanta). It is real as it is a manifestation of superself or universal consciousness. In support of his theory he introduces the Abhasa Vada, which to define most briefly in his own words:

" All that is i.e. all that can be said to exist in any way and with regard to which the use of any kind of language is possible be it the subject, the object or the means of knowledge or the knowledge itself, is Abhasa."

He further contends that subject and object cannot be divorced from each other, so the self also from the not - self. Knowledge of objects is the inter-mixture of the both, if these are treated as separate and opposite entities, there cannot be any concordance between these just as between light and darkness. Hence Abhinavagupta most cogently supplies the answer:

<verses>

"The (ultimate) in form is immanent and without form is transcendental."

In order to discriminate between His two aspects- transcendental and immanent-Vimarsha is the inevitable instrument. It could have been compared to the image- reflecting nature of a mirror, but during darkness images cannot be reflected, hence it needs external agents to illumine it. But the self does not need any such illuminator and can receive images by virtue of his self - independence "Svatantraya."

This Abhasa in its immanent aspect is composed of "Prakasha" and "Vimarsha".

In Shaiva terminology by "Prakasha" is meant residual traces also which are essentially the same as their substratum. As has been said above, these images being reflected are the same as Prakasha - the cause of reflection-light-in the ordinary sense. This "Prakasha" is definitely synonymous with "Sanskara". "Vimarsha" may be explained as the power of self to know it- in all its purity and not being obsessed by affections whatsoever.

Abhinavagupta has most successfully made his point in this field by saying:

<verses>

"This Self- Dependence (Svatantraya) faculty is essentially the power of action, which propels the "bliss of consciousness" and that may be taken as Vimarsha, its proponderance is quite appropriate."

This word "Svatantraya" has been given other names also by the Preceptors of Shaivism Vasugupta calls it "Chaitanya" being associated with "Chita" mind. The Spanda school takes it as "Sphurta" or Spanda. It is also called as "Mahasatta" and Paravak. This extraordinary interest in this faculty of "Svatantraya" by Shaiva teachers only proves as to what importance they attach to it. Perhaps it will be pertinent to relate here the conception of "Maya" as propounded by "Shaivas" and what personal contribution has been made by Abhinavagupta to illustrate and explain it.

"Maya" has been treated as a force of obsuration.

<verses>

It is more precisely born of the limited experience and so the perception of that universal experience gets blurred hence called "Ashudhavan" the path of impurity, as also the Mayadhavan, the course of Maya.

However, Abhinavagupta, gives a very concise yet pregnant definition of "Maya" by saying that "Maya" is the unmixed part of that transcendental self which engenders the shade of distinction in His "Svatantraya" power bereft of any kind of aids." Moreover this very faculty infatuates hence may be equated with Moha (embarrassment). Hence he says "Maya is the name of seduction". By the introduction of the word "Moha" as an equivalent of Maya it becomes very easy for the layman even to understand it in essence, the Moha of Arjuna being very well known. This Maya not only conceals the true nature of things and also self, but the experience of identity with the super-self is also obliterated. To bridge the presence of identity of the self with the superself, the Jnana (perception) plays a prominent part.

The Jnana (true perception) has been enunciated as having two aspects, Baudha (intellectual) and Paurusha (spiritual), the latter is the panacea for removing the obsuration because "the

experiencer having attained the stage of Highest bliss when his animal instincts have vanished altogether," finds that kind of perception which can differentiate between the real and the unreal. Consequently the course of Maya is replaced by "Transparent course."

Now the idea of "Moksha" (emancipation) as conceived by the Shaivas deserves some mention. While defining "Moksha", Abhinavagupta has to say:

<verses>

"The purity of consciousness, devoid of significance or otherwise is not only called "Moksha" but can taken any other name also."

Proceeding further, he explains the consciousness as:

<verses>

"The state of consciousness is nothing but Supreme perception."

From the above it is clear that "Moksha" is subjective realization of one's self and is both unilluminable by any external agent and unknowable by any means of knowledge.

It is super-transcendental state of experience. The three impurities of Maya comprising perception, action and innate ignorance (Anava) are to be surpassed as a whole. The predominance of Jnana (perception) is treated as a means of emancipation by other systems of Indian philosophical thought too, but Shaivas do not subscribe to this view in totality. They contend that even if the Jnana impurity is conquered, still the realizer cannot be treated as having been liberated in real sense of the term, in as much as, the two remaining impurities still persist in him. Hence the perfect freedom according to Trika can be got only through cognition - when all these three impurities get dissolved simultaneously into that supreme soul (Samvit).

Finally, the image of Abhinavagupta as a philosopher can remain incomplete if his arguments to refute various theories of Buddhists, Sankhyas, Naiyayikas and others are not reproduced here. Among the four schools of Buddhist philosophy only two Sautantrikas and Vijnanavadins have been singled out for criticism by Abhinavagupta.

The first school argues that perception is momentary, since everything is momentary. The object of perception just as a jar etc. ceases to exist immediately after casting its reflection on the eye and other sense-organs. By inference it can be established that the object and its reflection cannot co-exist. The one being the cause and the other the effect.

Abhinavagupta proceeds most intelligently to smash this verbose of Buddhist argumentative acumen.

"This external object is prone to perception, if this is not the case then no inference can be drawn even. From the rising smoke the inference of fire is quite clear, but the fire as such has already caught our perception in our kitchen or elsewhere." So it becomes quite clear that object cannot be detached from the subject. If these two are divided, then the question of building a bridge from one to another is very difficult.

The Vijnanavadins (sensationalists) do not at all believe in the existence of the external world. According to them self-consciousness is momentary and proceeds in the form of a chain or a stream. The links in chain are the Vasanas, which generate numerous sensations, called as daily cognitions. Hence a cognition is nothing but a presentiment brought about by Vasana. Abhinavagupta proceeds to refute this theory by vomiting out the contradiction inherent in this theory in as much as this school of Buddhist philosophy divides the existentiality in two groups the real (paramartha) and the apparent. The Vijnana only is real and that is reflected in it has only an apparent entity. The learned Shaiva commentator further contends logically that even if the apparent be unreal but its causes or source is to be admitted as real; but how can what is

nothing in itself be the cause of something? When the sensationalist brings in the Vasana element he merely repeats what the Bahayarthavadin means by object. How can even Vasana be the cause of presentiments which have no variety in themselves, and if each stream of self-consciousness is different from the rest, if the sensation caused by its own Vasana is exclusive and independent of each other, then each soul will be living in a world of its own and there would be no collaboration of many individuals in respect of the same object for instance carrying a heavy log.

Furthermore, Abhinavagupta proceeds to dismantle the house of sand built by Mimamsakas whose chief exponent is said to be Kumarila Bhatta. His Prakatatavada lays down that the relation between the subject and object is brought about by the "movement of the knowing-self and is an object of internal perception." He takes knowledge to mean simply an act of cognisor which engenders perception and manifested state in the object.

<verses>

Abhinavagupta proceeds to remark that Kumarila being a dualist cannot conceive the self-effulgent nature of knowledge. If the subject and object have an exclusive existence at the time of cognition and at the stage of manifestation, this is a part of the object exactly as are the other qualities such as blackness, in the case of a jar; but it should be manifest to all and, not to a few, as can be inferred from what Kumarila says. In this way, if a jar is made by a potter- its creator - then as the mimamsakas contend it should only become manifest to him alone. So this theory of manifestedness is not tenable as it cannot explain the fact of individual experience.

The Naiyayika's theory of knowledge consists in taking it as the illuminator of the object illuminated. The knowledge can be taken as the lamp which makes the object manifest:

<verses>

This example of lamp for knowledge is not appropriate. The lamp shines independently without having any kind of relation with any object it illuminates; knowledge is not so. It cannot be divorced from its antecedents. Moreover while imparting its light to the object actually transfers its own luminosity to it, because as we know that the appearance of the object is dependent on the light, but the Naiyayikas do not hold that knowledge can affect the object, so it cannot hold water in view of the refutation given above. Now we turn over to Sankhya system of philosophy which lays down that intellect is composed of three qualities - Sattva (transparence), Rajas (mobility) and Tamas (inertia). However, the content of "Sattva" (transparence) is predominant in it, so it is spotless by Nature. So it can receive reflection on all sides. It is like a mirror wherein the light of self-luminous self within and the reflection of an object outside become one. The aid of the intellect has been refuted by Abhinavagupta as follows:

The example of mirror and jar on which this theory is based is not correct, because according to this, then the reflecting agent and reflected object should be similar in their nature. Actually it is not the case; the intellect is sentient and the other insentient. They are definitely opposite to each other. Secondly even Sankhya will never admit that transparence of intellect is more than that of the self, such as the reflection of a flame in a mirror or that of the sun in the water; it cannot even satisfactorily answer that Buddhi with the light of the Luminous - self does itself become light or not. So the separate identity of intellect from the self is never possible, hence this theory does not cut much ice. So his verdict the insentient cannot have the capacity to manifest the objects, cannot stand any review whatsoever. It is definitely logically true and convincing.

Abhinavagupta does not even spare the "Dualist Shaivas" from his trenchant criticism. According to this Dualistic school of Shaivism whose chief advocate is Khetapala, the ignorance is a veil which conceals the perfection of self in respect of powers of knowledge and action.

Accordingly each soul by its separate variety of power cannot come face to face with that perfection which has been actually hidden by this (power etc), when this concealing power of ignorance is shattered by Divine grace in the case of a soul, then only the soul retains its former glory.

Abhinavagupta begins the refutation with a pertinent inquiry as to what can be the reason of the destruction or otherwise of this ignorance. It can not be action because it is acknowledged to be the cause of pleasant or unpleasant experience which a person enjoys or suffers. Lord's will cannot be also responsible for this because He is above partiality. He will not free some and imprison others. The second pertinent query made by Abhinavagupta is to the effect that what and how this ignorance conceals? Souls have been called eternal and un-changing, so ignorance cannot conceal these, if we concede this, then the souls will have to become transitory. If it can affect the changeless souls, then the liberated soul of even "Shiva" cannot remain unaffected by the concealing power of knowledge and action. If this will be the case, the cognition of self can never take place. Hence this theory is not only self-contradictory but also deluding.

In this scholarly way Abhinavagupta has very intelligently pointed to "Achilles heel" inherent in each of these systems of philosophy and has unerringly established the superiority of his faith over all others. He has no mercy, no compunction in riding rough - shod over the "premise" of his rivals. Their seemingly convincing arguments cannot bear the inherent supremacy of his thought as also of his diction, and get melted like snow before the scorching rays of the sun.

Abhinavagupta like a true son of the soil, does not advocate a fanatical devotion to his line of thinking. He allows us every right to differ from him, but the irresistible charisma of his thought, couched in dignified language - does definitely enthrall us. To speak squarely, he pleads for facing life and not fleeing from it. Like a practical thinker he exhorts us to eschew the meaning of life and afterwards yoke ourselves to redeem it in its truest possible perspective. His positive attitude to life and universe makes the existence more meaningful and hence rewarding.

He does not preach to discard the world and disown its attendant responsibilities, because it is essentially real. He instead of it, asks us to recognize ourselves in the image of the Lord who is not at all different from us. A person ought to develop true perception & healthy attitude for looking at his environment & then only he can recognise Him in himself and become likewise self-effulgent. The distance between the "ideal" and "real" can be easily fathomed by cognition when the mind is prepared to receive and emit images like an unblurred mirror.

Abhinavagupta performed his mission admirably and saved the humanity from the Jig-saw of intellectual acrobatics of Buddhist theology, culminating in nothingness, and in the same way from the Jargon of other systems of Indian philosophy which neither preach practical approach nor practical thinking, only telling us to reject the "present" just to prepare for "future". But Abhinavagupta affirms the existence of the present and treats it not as a means but as an end itself. Living in the present, taking life as it comes, taming it by the strength of perception and cognition is a sound prescription for the strife- torn world even at present, when its restiveness can easily be converted into quiet calm of super soul.

His attitude to life and its chief actor man - is summed up in this couplet; which he has understandably quoted from the Shastras:

<verses>

He, whose hands, feet, mind, learning, religious austerity and conduct are well balanced (restrained), enjoys the fruits of pilgrimage (even without going there)".

So, this Kashmiri philosopher weaning philosophy away from the mire of impracticability lives up to his name Abhinava. New from all angles, and his thought-provoking treatises breathe an air of ravishing freshness, even after a lapse of more than ten centuries.

Source: **Glimpses of Kashmiri Culture**

5.3 Abhinavagupta - The Encyclopaedic Scholar

R. K. Jalali

The present generation of Kashmiris is largely ignorant of the great luminaries - sages, saints and mystics - who from time immemorial not only gave new dimensions to the development of Kashmiri culture but also developed the cultural heritage of our homeland. One such luminary was Abhinavagupta Acharya. An outstanding Indian philosopher, a great intellectual and a writer on aesthetic theory, Abhinavagupta was a spiritual descendant of Somananda, founder of the Pratyabijnya metaphysics, the "recognition" school of Kashmiri Shaivist monism.

5.3.1 Introduction

As it is beyond the scope of this article to set out or elucidate the tenets of Kashmir monistic Shaivism and its great exponents, here only a brief introduction to the life and works of Abhinavagupta is given. Kashmir Shaivism was developed in the light of monism by great thinkers such as Somananda, Kallata, Utpala, Abhinavagupta and Khsemraja. Somananda, the author of Sivadristi who flourished towards the close of the 9th Century A.D., has been described as the founder of the Pratyabhijnya system; Utpaladeva, the author of Isvara Pratyabhijnya Sutras or Karikas, who lived about 900-950 A.D., is regarded as the organiser of this system; and Abhinavagupta, the author of the two commentaries, Laghvi-Vimarsini and Brahati- Vimarsini and also Tantraloka, is known as the expounder and commentator of Kashmir Shaivism. The later teachers who flourished between A.D. 1200 and 1800 included Kshemaraja, Yogaraja, Jayaratha, Sivopadyaya and Bhaskaracharya.

5.3.2 Ancestors

We get an authentic, though brief, account of Abhinavagupta's ancestors, parents, relatives, his several gurus and his distinguished works from his own commentaries. In the concluding lines of his commentary on the Paratrinshika which is a dialogue between Bhairava (Shiva) and Bhairavi (Shakti) in 35 Slokas and at the end of Ishwar Pratyabhijnya Vimarsini, Abhinavagupta writes that his remote ancestor, Attrigupta, lived in Autarvedi and migrated to Kashmir at the instance of King Lalitaditya. In the family of Attrigupta was born Varahagupta. His son was Narsimhagupta, known as Chukhala (a devotee of Shiva), and father of Abhinavagupta. His mother's name was Vimla or Vimalkala. Dr. K.C. Pandey states that being born of such spiritually high personages, Abhinavagupta was peculiarly qualified to compose a work containing a summary of all the Agama works on Trika- Shastra. He was a born Yogin, a devotee of Lord Shiva and led a celibate life. Among his great relatives Abhinavagupta makes a special mention of his father's maternal grandfather, Yasoraja, a man of great learning. One significant statement that he makes is that Yasoraja wrote a commentary on Paratrinshika for the benefit of his younger brother Monorathgupta, a Brahmin named Karna, son of Vallabha, a Minister of King Yashaskara of Kashmir, and one Ramadeva, who was proficient in grammar, Tarka and Mimansa.

On the basis of the facts we gather from his works it is believed that Abhinavagupta was probably born about 950 A.D. After having worked indefatigably for more than 40 years, and having fulfilled the great mission for which he was born, the tradition has it that "Abhinavagupta

entered the Bhairava cave in village (Bhiruva), along with his 1200 disciples, and thus departed from this world never to be seen again."

5.3.3 Voluminous Writer

In his distinguished book *Abhinavagupta*, Dr. Pandey writes that Abhinavagupta, being a voluminous writer, has to his credit as many as 41 works. Among his works the most notable are his two famous commentaries on IPK, namely *Isvara Pratyabhijnya Vimarsini* and *Isvara Pratyabhijnya Vivrti Vimarsini*, *Malini Vijayvartika Parmarthsara*, *Tantrasara*, *Tantraloka*, *Paratrimshika Vivrti*, *Bhairavastava*, *Kramastotra*, *Bodhpanchdashika* and *Bhagavadgitartha-Sangraha*.

Broadly speaking, Abhinavagupta's works fall into four groups. The first group deals with his work on Tantras. The most voluminous work in this group is *Tantraloka* that enumerates the Tantrik Agamas and dwells upon the Elevated way to freedom and the three methods of realizing the Ultimate Reality, known as *Sambhavopaya*, *Saktopaya* and *Anovapaya*. The other important work belonging to this group is *Malini-Vijaya Vivrti* which is supposed to have been written by him at *Pravarpura* in the eastern part of the valley.

The second group consists of his *Strotras* such as *Bhairavastava* and *Kramastotra* as well as a few small treatises like *Bodh-Punch Dashika*. A third group includes his works on dramaturgy, poetics, aesthetics and the rhetoric. He learnt dramaturgy under the guidance of a great master called *Tota* and poetics under *Induraja*. Prof. P.V. Kane maintains that in these two branches of learning, "his two works, i.e. *Lochan* and *Abhinav Bharati* are monuments of learning, critical insight, literary grace and style."

The last group constitutes his work on the *Pratyabhijnyasastra*, the monistic philosophy of Kashmir Shaivism. In this group we have his matchless contributions to this system, the profound and subtle commentaries on IPK.

5.3.4 Great Contribution

A word about Abhinavagupta's great contribution to *Pratyabhijnya* system. Together with *Somananda's* disciple, *Utpaladeva*, Abhinavagupta is the most important representative of the school. He conceived *Shiva*, the *I* or *Consciousness*, and the *All* as synonymous and multiplicity or objectivity as an expression of the freedom and strength of the '*I*' which it affirms and realizes itself precisely as *I*, *consciousness* or *freedom*. This concept of freedom (*Swatrantya*) is one of the principal achievements of Kashmiri Shaivist thought. As Abhinavagupta in his introduction to IPK holds:

<verses>

Pratyabhijnya, i.e. the recognition of the supreme nature of self. is prescribed in the system for the service of man, as a means of attaining all that is of the highest value. In its essence it unfolds the glorious possibilities and potentialities of man. It upholds the sovereignty of the individual and lays emphasis on recognising (*Pratabhijnya*) of self (*Atman*). The profounder faculty is the really *Real* within us. Man is not merely a speck of dust but an immense force, comprising a comprehensive consciousness and capable of manifesting through his mind and body limitless powers of knowledge and action (*Jnana Shakti* and *Kriya Shakti*). This system of thought alone is the most modern of all, inasmuch as it is based on sound rational and scientific principles.

Dr. R.K. Kaw analyses it thus: "It recognises the democratic idea of sovereignty of human individual i.e. superiority and dignity of man, and lays emphasis on equality and universal brotherhood of mankind, irrespective of diversity of caste, creed, colour and nationality."

Pratyabhijnya has thus shown to mankind a new way (Nava Marga) to human peace and freedom. This is what Abhinavagupta taught us 800 years ago. But for his expositions, this great philosophy of Kashmir could not have been evaluated in its true perspective. In fact, it was he who made this system intelligible, "although his ideas are mostly embedded in a mass of polemics." This encyclopaedic scholar is not only regarded as one of the noblest sons of Kashmir but also one of the most remarkable personalities of medieval India.

Source: **Koshur Samachar**

5.4 A glimpse into Abhinavagupta's ideas on aesthetics

by Geetika Kaw Kher

Abhinavagupta a distinguished philosopher, aesthete and saint was one of the most outstanding Acharyas of the Monistic Shaivism. His exact date of birth is not known but we learn from references about him in his works *Tantraloka* and *Paratrimshika Vivarana* that he lived in Kashmir about the end of the tenth and beginning of the eleventh century A.D. The earliest known ancestor of Abhinavagupta was a famous Brahmin *Attrigupta* a great Shaiva teacher and scholar of Kanauj, who had been invited to settle in Kashmir by King *Lalitaditya*.

Abhinava Gupta was thus born in a family which had a long tradition of scholarship and devoutness for Lord Siva. His father *Narasimhagupta* (*Cukhulaka*) and mother *Vimalakala* were great influence in his life and it is believed that they both underwent austerities to be bestowed with an extra ordinary son with spiritual powers.

Traditionally believed to have been a *Yoginibhu* (born of a *Yogini*), he mastered subjects like metaphysics, poetry and aesthetics at a very young age He possessed all the eight Yogic powers explained in *Shastras*. His biographers observed six great spiritual signs as explained in '*Malinivijayotara Shastra*', in him. Kashmir Shaivism is classified by Abhinavagupta in four systems viz. *Krama* system, *Spanda* system, *Kula* system and *Pratyabhijnya* system. '*Krama*' deals with space and time, '*Spanda*', with the movement, '*Kula*' with the Science of Totality and '*Pratyabhijnya*' with the school of Recognition. (Ref G.T. Deshpande's monogram on Abhinava Gupta for detailed explanation)

His two major works on Poetics, *Dhavyalokalocana* and *Abhinava Bharati* point towards his quest into the nature of aesthetic experience. In both these works Abhinava Gupta suggests that Aesthetic experience is something beyond worldly experience and he has used the word '*Alaukika*' to distinguish the former feeling from the mundane latter ones. He subscribed to the theory of *Rasa Dhvani* and thus entered the ongoing aesthetic debate on nature of Aesthetic pleasure.

Rasa--roughly translated: "as emotive aesthetics" - is one of the most important concept in classical Indian aesthetics, having pervasive influence in theories of painting, sculpture, dance, poetry, and drama. *Rasa* theory argues that the presentation of emotions is the proper object and domain of poetic discourse. *Bharata* in *Natyashastra* his pioneering work on Indian dramatics mentions eight *rasas* and says *Rasa* is produced when '*Vibhava*', *Anubhava* and *Vyabichari bhava* come together.

Vibhavanubhava-vyabichari-samyogat Rasa nispattih (*Rasa Sutra*, *Natyasastra*)

Vibhava: A medium through which an emotion arises in an actor e.g. A child riding a stick and enjoying it as if he were actually riding a horse

Anubhava: All the physical changes arising due to the *vibhavas* e.g. changes in facial expression and body language

Vyabichari bhava: Transient emotions e.g. weeping with joy

The language of feelings is not a private language; it is more a system of symbols, a language game that is understood by those who have learned its conventions and usages. Emotions treated in a poem are neither the projections of the reader's own mental states nor the private feelings of the poet; rather, they are the objective situations abiding in the poem as its cognitive content. Rasa is understood as residing in the situational factors presented in an appropriate language. A poet chooses a theme because he sees a certain promise for developing its emotional possibilities and exploits it by dramatizing its details.

The adherents of rasa theory believed rasa, to be the meaning of the poetic sentence but they had different ideas about the definition of art.

Abhinavabharati a commentary on Bharata's Natyasastra talks about these scholars and comments on their theories. Bhatta Lollata believed art to be an imitation of reality. His views were contested by Sri Sankuka who stated that art cannot be an imitation simply because it exists in a different place and time. Further he explained his point of view by giving the analogy of a pictorial horse (chitaraturaganyaya). He says when one sees a horse painted one doesn't mistake it for the original horse but one sees it as the representation of the original horse and thus derives the aesthetic pleasure through this identification. Since art cannot imitate all the qualities of the original subject hence it is just an inference and not an imitation. Bhatta Tauta, Abhinavagupta's teacher, raised a valid question regarding the imitation of the mental state. According to him there is no way an actor can feel and react in exactly the same way as the original character. The actor presents his feelings i.e. how he would react if put in the original characters position. Hence art cannot be inferred but depends on the imagination of the spectator.

Abhinavagupta though agrees to many of the suggestions put forward by Rasa theory also points at its various limitations. According to him art is not just about evoking certain feelings but a real work of art in addition to possessing emotive charge needs to have a strong sense of suggestion and capacity to produce various meanings. This is where he refers to Dhvanivada. He says that for a work of art it is not enough to be having abhida (literal meaning) and laksana (metaphorical meaning) but it should also possess Vyanjana the suggested meaning which has absolutely nothing to do with the other two levels of meaning. Thus an aesthetic experience cannot be experienced like any ordinary mundane experience. A true aesthetic object does not simply stimulate the senses but also stimulates the imagination of the spectator. Once the imagination is stimulated the spectator aesthete gets transported to a world of his own creation. This emotion deindividualises an individual by freeing him from those elements which constitute individuality such as place, time etc. and raises him to the level of universal. Thus art is otherworldly or Alaukika in its nature.

One of the major passage in which he dwells on alaukikatva is:

"When a man hears the words: 'A son is born to you' joy is produced (through the power of denotation - abhida). But the suggested sense (rasa and the like) is not produced the way joy is produced in the above case. Nor does it come about through the secondary usage (laksana, gunavrtti, bhakti). But it arises in a sensitive man (sahridaya - a man who is sensitive to literature) through his knowledge of vibhavas and anubhava, because of his hrdaya-samvada (sympathetic response) and his tanmayibhava (identification). It is vilaksana (different) from ordinary awareness of happiness etc. and it is not an objective thing" Dhvaynalokalocana, p.79

In this passage he points out clearly that the vibhavas do not correspond to any karana (reason) in case of art like they do in everyday life. They make the relish of Rasa possible and hence exist at a different plane altogether.

Abhinavagupta turned his attention away from the linguistic and related abstractions which had preoccupied even Anandavardhana, focussing his attention instead on the human mind, specifically the mind of the reader or viewer of a literary work. The first step in Abhinavagupta's project involved the recognition that the theory of rasadhvani, could not be understood as a

theory of abstract linguistic structure. Rather, it only made sense as a theory of the way people respond to literature. In other words, rasadhvani had to be conceived in psychological terms. According to this system the reader becomes the central focus of literary criticism. The aim of kavya is to give pleasure, but this pleasure must not bind the soul to the body.

Thus he attributed the state of divinity to arts and considered Shanta Rasa as the ultimate Rasa. According to him the pleasure one derives out of a real work of art is no less than divine pleasure. As one has to constantly struggle and detach oneself to reach the Almighty similarly a true connoisseur of arts has to learn to detach the work from its surroundings and happenings and view it independently, e.g. the feeling that might bring pain in real life is capable of causing pleasure in an art form. The great success of Greek tragedies can be attributed to the pleasure it aroused in the spectators and brought about the emotional Catharsis (purging out).

In his Dhvanyaloka Anandavardhana observes: "In the province of poetry (creative literature) obviously standards of truth and falsity have no relevance. Any attempt to find out or discover whether a poem (or any literary composition) is true or false by employing means of valid cognition leads to ridicule alone" Abhinavagupta comments on it: "Such a person will be ridiculed as follows: He is not able or competent to appreciate aesthetic experience or his mind has become (truly) hard by indulging in dry logic."

Thus he asserts that the "willful suspension of disbelief" is a prerequisite for enjoying any art form. The moment one starts questioning it or doubting it and looking at it objectively it loses its charm and status and becomes equivalent to any mundane object. One enjoys a play only when one can identify the character as the character from the drama and not as one's friend or associate. For the time that the drama goes on the character should take over the actor in a spectators mind i.e. the spectator should rise above the worldly connections and try to experience the supernatural aspect of art which has nothing to do with the worldly concerns.

6.0 UTPALADEVA

Very little is known about Utpala, the great mystic Saint of Kashmir, except that he might have lived somewhere in Nauhatta (Navyut) in Srinagar. From some authors on Kashmir Shaivism and his contemporaries we find that he was a Brahmin and lived a married life around the middle of 900 A.D. He was the son of Udayakar.

Utpaladeva must have been a precocious boy with a sharp intellect and a quest for learning. This becomes evident from the fact that he was taken as a disciple by the great philosopher. Siddha Somananda, whose great work Shivadrishti, the Pratyabhijnya Shastra (Philosophy of Recognition), inspired him to write the Ishwar Pratyabhijnya Karikas. It is stated in the Shivadrishti that Utpala was motivated to write the Karikas on the request of his son, Vibhramakara. Therein he summarized the teachings of his master and this work is spoken of as "the reflection of wisdom taught by Somananda". Kashmiri's Persian-knowing scholars have termed it is Khird-e-Kamil (wisdom of the sage).

6.1 Utpaladeva and his *Pratyabhijnya* Philosophy

Jankinath Kaul

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6.1.1 *Mass of Literature*

Together with the various commentaries there grew up a mass of literature around these Karikas (also called Sutras) of Utpaladeva. Thus, Pratyabhijnya assumed such an important position that the whole system of the Kashmir Shaiva philosophy has come to be known, outside Kashmir also, as the Pratyabhijnya Darshana. Even at present scholars from foreign lands taking up research work in the Pratybhijnya school of thought come to Kashmir to seek help and guidance from Shaivacharya Swami Lakshman Joo, the living Yogi and Jivanmukta (liberated while assuming body) at Ishaber, Nishat (Srinagar).

Although Ishwar Pratyabhijnya is heavy to study, yet it is a perfect work on philosophy. It is not only a set of philosophic doctrines but contains instructions on practical Yoga also. This is preached for the aspirants of highest calibre who have developed acute awareness. None of the means (Shambhavopaya, Shaktopaya and Anavopaya) is recognised in this philosophy. Only the five functions are to be followed. The doctrine advocates

<verse>.

6.1.2 No Impurity

Since there is no existence of impurity, whence can there be any erosion. It is only a change in the point of view. Nothing has happened to Shiva; no Jiva-bhava has been assumed by Him.

Somananda has explained the doctrine to Utpala with the following example:

A girl and a boy whose marriage has been fixed by their relatives and who have not seen each other happen to sit together along with their friends and relatives at a fair. The girl happens to serve refreshments to the boy. As a matter of course, there is no special feeling between the two. But, when an acquaintance comes and hints at the would-be marriage of the couple, at once feelings of love run through both the boy and the girl. The girl recognizes her lover. Such is the recognition of Jiva with Shiva. This is Pratyabhijnya philosophy in the nutshell, as preached comprehensively by Utpala. He sat and wrote these abstruse aphorisms on the philosophy in calm moments. This was his self-introspection.

Tradition has it that Utpala, in the later period of his life, would often be in ecstasy. He would sing rapturous notes, intensely musical and pregnant with meaning. These, verily, reveal the heart of Utpala. His poems give expression to the philosophical doctrines of Kashmir Shaivism known as Trika system of philosophy in a devotional form. These occupy the same place in this system as the Vedanta Stotras do in the Vedanta philosophy.

6.1.3 Adi Sankara

Utpala's philosophy is as deep as that of Adi Sankara, though, perhaps, more devotional. He believes in self-surrender and love. He uttered his poems in ecstasy which were noted and written down by his disciples. He was so deep in divine rapture that he had no body consciousness and when he came to it once and found almond blossoms strewn on the ground, he uttered; "O Shiva, Bhaktas have adorned You with flower wreathes. Only I fall back in adoring You", and instantly went into Samadhi. Again, while running in divine ecstasy, his locks would get entangled in the low-hanging branches of trees and he would feel that Shiva was catching hold of him. He would then sit there and be in meditation for long periods.

Utpala's poetic works were compiled by his disciples - Sri Rama and Adityaraja. Later a great scholar, Vishwavasta, divided these into 20 Stotras assigning a heading to each. It is also said that Utpala himself had assigned the headings Sangrahasotra, Jayasotra and Bhaktisotra to 13th, 14th and 15th Stotras.

This great work came to be known as Shivastotravali (a rosary of hymns to Shiva). Commentary in Sanskrit has been written to this work of Utpala by Kshemraja, the fourth in line of disciples. Utpala was followed by his pupil Lakshmanagupta, who was the guru of Abhinavagupta.

Shivastotravali (or Utpala-Stotravali) is so soul-stirring that once you read these Shlokas, you will continue to sing and muse on them. The ringing music in your ears will make you shed tears of joy and forget yourself. Kashmir's Persian scholars have termed it as Jnoon-e-Kamil (divine ecstasy of the sage). A stir is experienced while singing:

<verses>

"O Lord! Stand by my side and listen to the definition in brief of pleasure and pain. What is union with Thee is pleasure and what is separation from Thee is pain."

6.1.4 Isolational Joy

Here you have the feeling of isolational joy that you experience by listening to the shrill voice of a morning bird or the continuous flow of a waterfall. Utpala, for all purposes, was a loving and pure-hearted mystic. As the chief characteristic of his language is symbolism, he appeals to all

sections of people. He has the power to penetrate human feelings and enraptures one with his dynamic touch. His great utterance to this effect is:

<verses>

"O Lord! I may have increased desire for the objective world like other people but with this difference that I shall look upon it as Thyself without any idea of duality."

The available works of Utpaladevacharya are as follows:

Pratyabhijnya Karikas (or Sutras);

Shivastotravali (with Kshemaraja's Sanskrit commentary and Hindi commentary by Swami Lakshman Joo); and

Ishwara-Siddhi and Ajadapromatri-Siddhi.

Source: **Koshur Samachar**

6.2 **Pratyabhijna** Expounded by Utpaladeva

Jankinath Kaul 'Kamal'

The Pratyabhijna School is quite akin to the non-dual vedantic thought of Ajatavada explained by Gaudapada. Vasugupta was the first propounder of Shaivism in Kashmir. He flourished in the middle of the late Eighth Century A.D. Worship of different deities, Yoga systems and Shaiva faith have already been in practice here. According to Dr. K.C. Pandey, Kula, and 'Krama' system of Shaivism existed here much before Atri Gupta and Sangamaditya were invited by king Lalitaditya (725-761 A.D.) to settle in Kashmir. 'Agamas' are believed to be as old as 'Vedas'. It is natural that after the lapse of a certain cycle of time an established system of thought begins to fade away. Its revival, which emanates from God Himself, is also natural. - Shaivism was thus revived in Kashmir when Lord Shiva Himself revealed 'Shiva-sutras' to Vasugupta in the vicinity of Harwan Village. He re-established the faith by explaining the Sutras to his disciples. With this he combated the growing Buddhism in Kashmir. This faith developed into two school of thought-one Spanda system of thought and the other Pratiyabhijna Philosophy; Siddha Somananda's Shivdrishti explains the latter. His teachings were imbibed well by his disciple Utpaladev, who possessed a sharp intellect. This brilliant disciple reestablished the thought of 'recognition' with his illustrious work Ishwara - Pratyabhijna. It is stated that Utpala was motivated to write the Karikas at the request of his son Vibhramakara, who wanted to imbibe them. In this treatise Utpala reflects the wisdom taught to him by his preceptor. It is an exhaustive exposition of the Philosophy of Recognition. Persian Scholars of Kashmir have termed it Khird-i-Kamil, "Wisdom of the sage". Together with various commentaries on this book and other similar works there grew up a mass of literature round the Pratyabhijha Karikas of Utpala. This work assumed such importance that the whole system of Kashmir Shaiva philosophy came to be known as Pratyabhyha Darshan in India and the countries abroad.

We know little about the early life of Utpala, who grew to be a great mystic saint of Kashmir. This, however, comes to us by tradition that he lived somewhere at Nowhata in Srinagar and that his time was the middle of the ninth century A.D. This is also as calculated from the date available in Rajatarangini. From the colophones of the works of his contemporary authors and those who followed him, we know that he was a Brahmin and lived a married life. His father's name was Udayakara. Utpala was followed by his disciple Lakshmana Gupta, one of the preceptors of the great Abhinavgupta, who wrote an exhaustive commentary and gloss on this work.

Although Utpala's Ishwara Pratyabhijha is difficult to assimilate as it deals with abstruse logic, yet it is a perfect work on this philosophy. It is not only a set of philosophic doctrines but also contains instruction on practical yoga. It is, therefore, interesting for aspirants of the highest ability, who can develop constant awareness of Supreme Consciousness. The three means advocated by Kashmir Shaivism in general are recognised in this philosophy. It is, however, known as Anupaya - the means without any means. The doctrine as summed up by Abhinavagupta is:

"Only the five great functions are to be followed. Since there is no existence of impurity, whence can there be any erosion: it is only a change in point of view. Otherwise, nothing has happened to Shiva. No Jeeva Bhava has been assumed by Him." (Abhinavagupta's commentary).

This doctrine of 'Recognition' was explained by Somananda to Utpaladev with the help of the following illustration:

A girl and a boy whose marriage was fixed and who did not know each other, one day happened to sit together along with their relatives and friends at a fair. During this short company the girl served tea to the party in which one was her would-be groom. There was no stir of feeling in either of them. But while tea was being served, a common acquaintance gave a hint of the scheduled marriage to the one sitting by his side. Instantly a wave of the feeling of love ran through the bodies of both. The girl recognized her lover." In the same way 'Jeeva' recognizes himself in Shiva with the help of his preceptor. This is the philosophy of 'Recognition' in a nutshell. Utpala explained this more comprehensively than his teacher had. He sat and wrote his abstruse aphorisms during calm moments. It was his self-introspection which got established as philosophy. Gaudapada, the grand preceptor of 'Adi Shankaracharya' also had expounded a similar philosophy earlier. It is known as 'Ajatavada' in the Advaita vedanta philosophy. He says that nothing is born and so nothing dies. It is only the change in vision that the world appears as such." Utpala explained the philosophy in his own way and convincingly too.

Tradition goes that Utpala, during the later period of his life, would often be in spiritual ecstasy. His practices had ripened by the divine grace of Lord Shiva as a result of which he uttered notes full of divine rapture, intensely musical and pregnant with esoteric meaning. These utterances, verily, reveal the 'heart of Utpala'. He gave the same philosophy an exclusively devotional tinge. He sang verses in different tunes in praise of his Lord, expressing non-dual devotion, 'Abheda Bhakti'. He was so engrossed in ecstasy that he could not keep a record of his composition. He 'floated' above body consciousness.

Since divinity also recedes to duality more often than not, while the soul resides in the body, Utpala at times came down to it when he opened his eyes to look around, his spiritual joy predominated in him. Filled with divine consciousness he would find his own mental reflection outside and get instantly drawn within. Once in spring, being in his ecstatic mood for long, Utpala opened his eyes and saw almond blossoms strewn by wind on the ground. At once he exclaimed: "Ah! devotees have performed worship and adorned the Lord with flower wreaths. Only I fall back." Uttering this he instantly got into Samadhi again.

Another time, while running in divine ecstasy, Utpala's locks got entangled among bushes. He felt that his beloved Shiva was catching hold of him. Imagining this he got drawn into meditation. To common people this may mean that Utpala was a psychological abnormality with a soft heart. Since psychology has no approach to the spiritual field, as it is beyond the range of mind and matter, Utpala is known to have measured a considerable divine height. He needed not to sit for meditation. Shiva was always in his being just as Mother Kali's Divinity was always present in Paramahansa Ramakrishna's being. He sang in a melodious tune while panting for the final beatitude of Shiva, addressing him with earnest devotion. This speaks of the extent of

his joy, the expression of which was termed Janun-i-Kamil - divine ecstasy of the sage by the Persian scholars.

Thus Utpaladev is said to have composed in this state a large number of verses many of which were collected and compiled by his disciples Sri Ram and Adityaraja. Finally, these were classified into twenty hymns by a great scholar Vishwavarata, who gave each hymn his own heading. The collection is named Utpala's Shivastotravali. This information has come down to us from Kshema Raja, a later author, and a disciple of Abhinavagupta.

In his exhaustive commentary on Sivastotravali Kshemaraj tells us, at the very outset of the book, that Utpala had, however, named three hymns himself. These are Sangrastotra, Jayastotra and Bhaktistotra - thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth chapters respectively as arranged in the book. Unplumbed depths of one's heart get stirred as the rhythm on reciting of the verses touches one's ears. One sits rapt and breathless. A new life, a new course of study and meditation seems to begin. The centre of interest gets shifted. You continue to sing to yourself or the muse on the versified lines. Tears of joy, like pearls, trickle down the eyes and one virtually forgets oneself. Utpala addresses his beloved:

<verses>

***O Lord: just, a while to listen to me
My pleasure and pain, in a nut-shell, I tell.***

***This being with thee is joy Supreme,
Bereft of thy grace, I suffer again.***

Here you have a feeling of the joy of solitude that is experienced by listening to the shrill voice of a morning bird or the continued flow of a waterfall. Utpala, for all purposes, was a mystic, a loving and pure-hearted soul whose example we much later again find in Lalleshwari, Nund Rishi and Ropa Bhawani. Swami Rama Tirtha was also one of such exalted modern saints.

As the chief characteristic of Utpala's language is symbolism, it appeals to all sects of people, especially to those who understand it. His power of penetrating human hearts enraptures one with his dynamic touch. He sang:

<verses>

***O Lord: I may possess like common people, desire for enjoyment in the world. But with
this difference that I should look upon these as thyself - without the least idea of duality.***

Utpala laid stress on reconciliation of knowledge and devotion which practically means earnestness in knowing the self. He categorically expressed:

<verses>

***"There is naught but thy existence in the Universe for those endowed with knowledge of
self."***

"Thy worship is great celebration for those who are blessed by thee."

Both these statements ever befit thy earnest devotees." Again he gushed

<verses>

***"All their actions bear fruit who worship thee for their fulfillment. But every act of thy
devotees who reside in thee is the fruit by itself."***

These lyrical songs of Utpala are pithy and pierce through the very recesses of the heart of a devotee who is endowed with Divine grace. Utpala sang, rather uttered these notes like a singing bird, not for others but for himself, drowned into the Divine. His own feelings and

emotions, joys and sorrows and above all his intense longing as an earnest seeker of spiritual Truth are vividly pictured in the hymns.

Utpala's philosophy of Recognition can be summed up in the lines of Carol Schnieder

*"Being sad with you is more beautiful
Than being happy Anywhere else."*

This exactly conveys what Utpaladeva says to Lord Siva.

[Sh. Janki Nath Koul 'Kamal 'is a well-known scholar and writer. Recently, he got a prestigious award - a Certificate of Honour - from the President of India. He lives in Jammu]

Source: **Patrika**

but her mother-in-law made her miserable. She would even speak ill of Lalla to her husband. Poor Lalla knew no happiness either with her husband or with her mother-in-law.

When Lalla was twenty-six she renounced the family and became a devotee of Shiva. Like a mad person, she would go around naked.

She became a disciple of Sidh Srikanth. She would only keep the company of sadhus and pi:rs. She did not think in terms of men and women. She would claim that she had yet to encounter a man, and that is why she went about naked. But when she saw Shah Hamdan, she hid herself saying: "I saw a man, I saw a man."

Why is Lalla so famous in Kashmir? She was illiterate, but she was wise. Her sayings are full of wisdom. In these sayings, she dealt with everything from life, yoga, and God to dharma and a:tma:.. Her riddles are on the lips of every Kashmiri.

The exact date of Lalla's death is not known. It is claimed that she died in Bijbehara (vejibro:r). People like Granny Lalla do not really die. Lal Ded is alive in her sayings and in the hearts of Kashmiris.

The sayings of Lalla number around two hundred.

7.1.1 Five Sayings of Lal Ded

I

*By a way I came, but I went not by the way.
While I was yet on the midst of the embankment
with its crazy bridges, the day failed for me.
I looked within my poke, and not a cowry came to hand
(or, at!, was there).
What shall I give for the ferry-fee?
(Translated by G. Grierson)*

II

*Passionate, with longing in mine eyes,
Searching wide, and seeking nights and days,
Lo' I beheld the Truthful One, the Wise,
Here in mine own House to fill my gaze.
(Translated by R.C. Temple)*

III

*Holy books will disappear, and then only the mystic formula will remain.
When the mystic formula departed, naught but mind was left.
When the mind disappeared naught was left anywhere,
And a voice became merged within the Void.
(Translated by G. Grierson)*

IV

*You are the heaven and You are the earth,
You are the day and You are the night,
You are all pervading air,
You are the sacred offering of rice and flowers and of water;
You are Yourself all in all,
What can I offer You?*

V

*With a thin rope of untwisted thread
Tow I ever my boat o'er the sea.
Will God hear the prayers that I have said?
Will he safely over carry me?
Water in a cup of unbaked clay,
Whirling and wasting, my dizzy soul
Slowly is filling to melt away.
Oh, how fain would I reach my goal*

(Translated by R.C. Temple)

Source: An Introduction to Spoken Kashmiri

7.2 Lalleshwari - Forerunner of Medieval Mystics

"Her sayings echo and re-echo to this day"

P.N. Kaul Bamzai

As in the rest of India, the middle of the 14th century was a period of religious and moral fermentation in Kashmir. Buddhism had practically disappeared from the Valley, though we find mention of Buddhist priests and viharas in the later Rajataranginis. Tilakacharya, described as a Buddhist, was a minister of Zain-ul-Abidin. Most of the Buddhist theologians and saints finding the Valley uncongenial, had left for Ladakh and Tibet. The long period of political instability which followed the peaceful and enlightened reign of Avantivarman (855-83 A.D.) was responsible for the ossification of the predominant religion, Shaivism, into elaborate and complicated rituals which dominated all social and cultural activities. Shaktism, born of the love for Durga worship, had degenerated into grotesque forms of rites and ceremonies. Vaishnavism was not a strong element in the religious fabric of the Valley, but in the 11th century it received further nourishment from the teachings of Ramanuja who travelled all the way from Madras to Kashmir to fight Shaivism at its fountain-head. And with the destruction of temples and images by several Hindu kings like Harsha, as well as by Muslim zealots, Hindu worship was driven to the seclusion of the home or of 'natural' (Svayambhu) images - rocks, or ice formations, or springs. Sanskrit became the domain of the learned few, the common man having taken to a form of Prakrit which though retaining its essentials, was yet wholly different from the 'Language of the Gods'.

7.2.1 Impact of Islam

In this troubled period of political uncertainty and changing social values, the people of the Valley were subjected to the impact of Islam. From a close contact between the two religions and their deep influence on each other, there resulted the evolution of what may be called Medieval Reformers or Mystics.

For more than two hundred years Islam had, in central Asia and Persia, been similarly influenced by the teachings and dogmas of Mahayana Buddhism and Upanishadic philosophy, resulting in the emergence of a cult of Islamic mystics. Fortunately, the new religion entered the Valley in this form, being carried there by enlightened Sufis like Bulbul Shah. With their humanistic approach to religion, they found a ready and sympathetic response from the Kashmiris, already permeated with the teachings of mystic saints and "seers".

For, it was during this period of religious fermentation that a need had been felt for a new approach to religion embracing all creeds and castes appealing to the 'heart' rather than the 'head'. Thanks to its rich religious and philosophic traditions, Kashmir rose to the occasion and

produced a number of mystics and saints who by their teachings and their lives of complete self-abnegation were the living embodiments of true religion and morality.

7.2.2 Mother Lalla Appears

Foremost among them was the great mystic "seer", Lalleshwari, popularly known as Lal Ded (Mother Lalla), who profoundly influenced the thought and life of her contemporaries and whose sayings still touch the Kashmiri's ear, as well as the chords of his heart, and are freely quoted by him as maxims on appropriate occasions. She was born in about the middle of the 14th century of the Christian Era in the time of Sultan Ala-ud-din. Lall's parents lived at Pandrenthan (ancient Puranadhithana) some four and a half miles to the south-east of Srinagar. She was married at an early age, but was cruelly treated by her mother-in-law who nearly starved her. This story is preserved in a Kashmiri proverb: Whether they killed a big sheep or a small one, Lalla had always a stone for her dinner - an allusion to her mother-in-law's practice of putting a lumpy stone on her platter and covering it thinly with rice, to make it look quite a big heap to others. And yet she never murmured.

Her father-in-law accidentally found out the truth. He got annoyed with his wife and scolded her. This incident invited more curses on Lalla. Her mother-in-law poisoned the ears of her son with all sorts of stories. Ultimately, the anomalies and cruelties of worldly life led her to renunciation and she discovered liberty in the life of the spirit.

She found her guru in Sidh Srikanth, whom she ultimately excelled in spiritual attainments:

***Gav Tsatha guras Khasithay
Tyuth var ditam Diva
The disciple surpassed the Guru:
God grant me a similar boon***

She pursued Yoga under Sidh Srikanth, until she succeeded in reaching the 'abode of nectar'. But she did not stop there. All around her was conflict and chaos. Her countrymen and women needed her guidance. She had a mission to perform, and well and effectively she did it. Her life and sayings were mainly responsible in moulding the character of her people and setting up tradition of love and tolerance which characterises them even today.

7.2.3 As Wandering Preacher

Eventually she gave up her secluded life and became a wandering preacher. She led a severely ascetic life, clad in the bareness of one who had forsaken comforts, and by example and precept conveyed her teachings to the masses. Like Mira she sang of Siva, the great beloved, and thousands of her followers, Hindus as well as Muslims, committed to memory her famous Vakyas.

There is a high moral teaching which Lalla demonstrated when during her nude state a gang of youthful rowdies were mocking her. A sober-minded cloth vendor intervened and chastised them. On this she asked the vendor for two pieces of ordinary cloth, equal in weight. She put them on either shoulder and continued her wandering. On the way some had salutations for her and some had gibes. For every such greeting she had a knot in the cloth, for the salutations in the piece on the right, and for the gibes in the piece on the left. In the evening after her round, she returned the pieces to the vendor and had them weighed. Neither had, of course, gained or lost by the knots. She thus brought home to the vendor, and her disciples, that mental equipoise should not be shaken by the manner people greeted or treated a person.

So that her teachings and spiritual experiences might reach the masses, she propagated them in their own language. She thus laid the foundations of the rich Kashmiri literature and folklore.

More than thirty per cent of the Kashmiri idioms and proverbs derive their origin from her Vakyas.

7.2.4 Spiritual and Philosophical Vakyas

These Vakyas or sayings are an aggregate of Yoga philosophy and Saivism, expressive of high thought and spiritual truth, precise, apt and sweet. Her quatrains are now rather difficult to understand as the language has undergone so many changes, and references to special Yogic and philosophic terms are numerous therein.

Some of these sayings have been collected and published by Dr. Grierson, Dr. Barnett, Sir Richard Temple and Pandit Anand Koul and apart from the consideration that they explain the Saiva philosophy of Kashmir through the Kashmiri language, they exemplify the synthesis of cultures for which Kashmir has always been noted.

Lalla fills her teachings with many truths that are common to all religious philosophy. There are in it many touches of Vaishnavism, the great rival of Saivism, much that is strongly reminiscent of the doctrines and methods of the Muhammadan Sufis who were in India and Kashmir well before her day, and teachings that might be Christian with Biblical analogies, though Indian's knowledge of Christianity must have been very remote and indirect at her date.

Lalla is no believer in good work in this or in former lives, in pilgrimages or austerities. In one of her sayings she criticises the cold and meaningless way in which religious rituals are performed:

***God does not want meditations and austerities
Through love alone canst thou reach the Abode of Bliss.
Thou mayst be lost like salt in water
Still it is difficult for thee to know God.***

All labour, to be effective, must be undertaken without thought of profit and dedicated to Him. Exhorting her followers to stick fast to ideals of love and service to humanity, paying no thought to the praise or condemnation that might follow from their observance, she says:

***Let them jeer or cheer me;
Let anybody say what he likes;
Let good persons worship me with flowers;
What can any one of them gain I being pure?

If the world talks ill of me
My heart shall harbour no ill-will:
If am a true worshipper of God
Can ashes leave a stain on a mirror?***

She is a strong critic of idolatry as a useless and even silly "work" and adjures the worshippers of stocks and stones to turn to Yogic doctrines and exercises for salvation:

***Idol is of stone temple is of stone;
Above (temple) and below (idol) are one;
Which of them wilt thou worship O foolish Pandit?
Cause thou the union of mind with Soul.***

She further castigates the fanatical followers of the so-called "religions" in the following apt saying:

***O Mind why hast thou become intoxicated at another's expense?
Why hast thou mistaken true for untrue?
Thy little understanding hath made thee attached to other's religion;
Subdued to coming and going; to birth and death.***

But Lalla is not a bigot; she constantly preaches wide and even eclectic doctrines; witness the following and many other instances: "it matters nothing by what name the Supreme is called. He is still the Supreme;" "Be all things to all men;" "the true saint is the servant of all mankind through his humility and loving kindness," "It matters nothing what a man is or what his work of gaining his livelihood may be, so long as he sees the Supreme properly."

She puts no value on anything done without the saving belief in Yogic doctrine and practice, one of the results of which is the destruction of the fruits of all work, good or bad. The aspirant should try to attain perfection in this life. He only requires faith and perseverance:

***Siva is with a fine net spread out
He permeath the mortal coils
If thou whilst living canst not see
Him, how canst thou when dead
Take out Self from Self after pondering over it***

She is a firm believer in herself. She has become famous and talks of the "wine of her sayings" as something obviously precious, and alludes often to her own mode of life, fully believing she has obtained Release:

***I saw and found I am in everything
I saw God effulgent in everything.
After hearing and pausing see Siva
The House is His alone; Who am I, Lalla.***

The removal of confusion caused among the masses by the preaching of zealots was the most important object of her mission. Having realised the Absolute Truth, all religions were to her merely paths leading to the same goal:

***Shiv chuy thali thali rozan;
Mo zan Hindu to Musalman.
Truk ay chuk pan panun parzanav,
Soy chay Sahivas sati zaniy zan.***

***Siva pervades every place and thing;
Do not differentiate between Hindu and Musalman.
you art intelligent recognise thine own self;
That is the true acquaintance with God.***

7.2.5 The Great Mystic

The greatness of Lalla lies in giving the essence of her experiences in the course of her Yoga practices through the language of the common man. She has shown very clearly the evolution of the human being, theory of nada, the worries and miseries of a jiva and the way to keep them off. The different stages of Yoga with the awakening of the Kundalini and the experiences at the six plexi have been elucidated by her.

Much can, indeed, be said on her work as a poet and more, perhaps, on her work in the spiritual realm. But at a time when the world was suffering from conflict - social, political and economic - her efforts in removing the differences between man and man need to be emphasised.

The composite culture and thought she preached and the Orders she founded was an admixture of the non-dualistic philosophy of Saivism and Islamic Sufism. As long back as the 13th century she preached non-violence, simple living and high thinking and became thus Lalla Arifa for Muhammadans and Lalleshwari for Hindus.

She was thus the first among the long list of saints who preached medieval mysticism which later enwrapped the whole of India. It must be remembered that Ramananda's teaching and that

of those that came after him could not have affected Lalla, because Ramananda flourished between 1400 and 1470, while Kabir sang his famous Dohas between 1440 and 1518, and Guru Nanak between 1469 and 1538. Tulsidasa did not come on the scene till 1532 whereas Mira flourished much later.

Source: **Koshur Samachar**

7.3 A Tribute to Lalla Yogeshwari - Pride and Soul of Kashmir

P.K. Kaul

Man's preoccupation with acquiring and adding to his material comforts has assumed such proportions that his belief in God and his native divinity are dismissed as primitive, irrational and unscientific sentiments. He marches through life deeply committed to his material well-being and as deeply indifferent to and ignorant of his spiritual needs. Through its continual contact with the phenomenal world the mind, thus, keeps our consciousness tethered to the physical plane, identifying the material world outside, instead of the Self within, as the main focus of attention. We identify ourselves as mortal bodies with great gusto and, unfortunately, ignore the immortal Life-Force, which brings this otherwise corpse of a body alive and gives it meaning, with extreme neglect. In spite of being the repositories of the priceless gem, we masquerade as beggars, unable to keep pace with our desires, associating ourselves with death rather than life and seeking tinsel and trash in the ever changing material world which is never likely to give us anything better than decay and death. This is typical of life in the current Kali age which is characterised by the decline in morality, prevalence of falsehood and upsurge of selfishness, greed and hatred.

Whilst going through the literature available on the life and times of Lalla Yogeshwari, one of the greatest apostles of light and love that Kashmir has known, who was equally revered by Hindus and Muslims alike, I was deeply touched by the profundity of the spiritual truths enshrined in her wise sayings urging mankind to recognise its divine heritage, to give up the frivolities of material existence and rise above hypocrisy and sectarian bigotry. Marvelling at the sweetness and sublimity of her timeless utterances suffused with great tenderness and love, and reflecting upon how she would have reacted to the quality of life today, I was inspired to pen down, following in her style, the following eight verses as a tribute to the memory of that great yogini:

**1. Yottaani pozz pazzay, tottaani aalam dazzay,
Pazzarich pritchagaar kaansi no wannay;
Apazuk vodbav gatchaan hani hannay,
Pazzaruk moll na-ba chhui kuni kannay.**

What a great pity that we wake up to the Truth only when it is too late! No one seems to be the least bit inclined or disposed towards acknowledging the Reality or seeking the Truth in time. As falsehood and untruth appear to flourish by and by, Reality and Truth, as surely, recede beyond reach and recognition.

**2. Assalichi ropayi no chhui kanh ti pritchaan,
Khotchi ropayi ho bisyaar sood meilaan;
Pozz chhonaan apuz yasla vopdaan,
Buthi buthi dith-ti-no paayas pyavaan.**

Recognising the Truth (immortality of Atma, the Life-Force) has gone out of fashion; the blind worship of untruth (identity with the body-mind complex) is seen to reap rich dividends. As the Truth gets devalued, falsehood gets up-valued exponentially. Even though it brings us nothing but grief and unhappiness yet, strangely, we seem unable or unwilling to alter our course towards self- destruction!

**3. Choorā akh wuchhum watta paanchh meinaan,
Khevaan chavaan ta taav taav karaan;
Dalimati magazav watti watti pheiraan,
Hairaan ta wairaan, saar na-kenh soaraan.**

A thief I saw roaming the five streets. Mind which is nothing but a bundle of thoughts and desires is the thief referred to. It reaches out, makes contact with and enjoys the objects of the world, through the five senses of touch, taste, sight, sound and smell. It gathers unto itself the impressions from these objects forming veil upon veil of ignorance. Since the objects are not permanent, the impressions gathered therefrom cannot be lasting either. They are but passing shadows without any substance and are therefore referred to as ignorance. Having lost its marbles, this thief (mind) his wallowing in sense pleasures, completely baffled and bewildered and utterly ruined with nothing to show for its troubles.

**4. Beni-boay maij-ta-mole yem thov na vannay,
Assalich wath su-no vuchhi kuni kannay;
Dara dara darbadar pheri kanni kannay,
Sahaz kar vechaar nata kyah bannay.**

He who does not heed the counsel of wisdom (from his well-wishers), he who does not respond to the prompting of his inner conscience and use his powers of discrimination, he will never find himself treading the path of Truth. From door to door and pillar to post (enjoying one desire after another, yet never satiating the hunger) will he find himself wandering aimlessly and unfulfilled. Contemplate this truth with due diligence, otherwise you might as well give up any notion of redemption.

**5. Hess ta hoash dallimit, annigatti wallimit,
Bar mandinen ho choor chiiy farimit;
Kaam kroodh loobh mooh chovaapaerfalirnit,
Zinda paanas chhiy morada jaama gandimit.**

You seem to have taken complete leave of your senses and allowed yourself to be enveloped by darkness (of ignorance). Under the cloak of this darkness with which you have chosen to wrap yourself, you have enabled the robbers to gain entry even in broad day-light! In consequence, desire, anger, greed, attachment, pride and jealousy, the six deadly foes, are enjoying the freedom of the house with absolute impunity and robbing you of your peace and tranquility. Remember! The Life-Force (Atma) never dies, the body-mind complex, no better than a piece of meat in a butcher's shop, is never alive; what a pity then that you should parade the precious immortal Self as the lifeless mortal body!

**6. Tchu kus ta ba kus, hu kyah ta yi kyah,
Apazui aalam rozavun kati kyah;
Fungaryomut chhukh, taaras dikh kyah,
Swopna-maay chain maali, gaj gah chhu kyah.**

Who are you and who am I? What is that and what is this? Questions such as these only underline the apparent diversity and manifoldness of the manifested universe and ignore the all important underlying unity and oneness. Since the universe is changing, inconstant and transitory, how can it possibly fit the definition of the unchanging and eternal Truth? Ask yourself, what aspect of the universe composed of the five primordial elements will endure and last? Having squandered all powers of discrimination in subservience to the unruly mind, you have rendered yourself bankrupt and become destitute; what O what fee will you render to redeem yourself with? Wake up to the realisation before it is too late that what you behold through the five senses is nothing but a grand illusion, a dream, however well designed, well laid out and real it may appear to be.

**7. Azapa Gayatri manas laya annay,
Mana choor dalli-bhramma teli hani hannay;
Catta chali gaash yiya, pozz ada nunnay,
Soo-Ham dui chalith akui AUM sunnay.**

Let your life breath dance to the tune of He am (So-Hum) and I am He (Hum-Sah). Only taming it thus can the flippant mind be trained to gradually rid itself of its delusion, and only thereafter will the dark clouds of ignorance lift, letting in the light of wisdom and experiencing the effulgence of the Atma. And then, in time, will even the duality of He and I dissolve, yielding place to AUM, one Truth, One God.

**8. Woth zuva beh traav, praan mo raavraav,
Somana maali huend mokhta mo chhakaraav;
Bhakhti-bhaav praavith agyaan chalaraav,
Aham gaal, Meuon traav, sa haz prakaash praav.**

Wake up therefore and stir into action O slothful ignoramus! Squander not the precious gift of life, cast away not before the swine the pearls of wisdom, waste not your breath and effort; seek out and secure the lamp of faith and devotion and with the help of its light dispel the darkness of ignorance. Get rid of the notion of 'I and Mine' and, through the dissolution of the thinking and the calculating mind in the supreme effulgence of the Atma, earn the right to proclaim the victory of Truth over falsehood, of Light over darkness, of Life over death. As a tribute to our beloved mother Lalla, it is my earnest hope that, in spite of the trying times we find ourselves in, we do not lose the true perspective on life, but live up to her ideals and make our sojourn on earth a worthwhile pilgrimage.

Source: **Koshur Samachar**

7.4 Lalleshwari - An apostle of Human values

Prof. K. N. Dhar

Cultural heritage of a country borrows measured sustenance from the philosophy of life nurtured inch by inch, by its denizens from the time, man awoke to the consciousness of self and spirit. It may well be called the culmination of quest of man from finite mooring, to infinite dimensions. At the same time, this search of man for finding his feet on the spiritual plane, can in no way be the last word on this subject, since such pursuits are cumulative in character and content. This edifice comes into being brick by brick, hammered into proper shape by savants and saints from time to time. However, it calls for reinterpretation every day in and out, so that the erring human being, with all his frailties, is not derailed into the abyss of animality. Perhaps this is the veritable theme of the famous word of Lord Krishna in Gita "when vice prevails and virtue dwindles, I resurrect my own being for proffering refuge to the virtuous and annihilating vice completely; thus re-establishing human values in every age". In our happy valley Lalleshwari most charitably projected such human values, so dear to Kashmiris from the dawn of history. An irrefutable proof of this attitude of conciliation instead of confrontation can be gleaned from the pages of Nilamata Purana wherein Lord Buddha has been acknowledged as an incarnation of God Avatara. Buddhism, to speak squarely, was essentially a revolt against Brahmanism, yet the catholic Brahmin with his proverbial forbearance did not use the same language or adopt the same attitude as the Buddhists had employed with respect to Brahmanism. The healthy approach of Kashmiri Brahmins was never negative in essence but purely positive. So, we can safely assert that Lalleshwari, a vigilant sentinel of Kashmiri culture displayed highest magnitude of courage and foresight in those not very auspicious times beckoning man not to discriminate on the basis of religious labels:

<verses>

It was actually the continuation of that Catholic attitude of mind displayed by Kashmiris from times immemorial.

However, time does not maintain a uniform tenor or temper. It is at times moody and capricious; and when the political map of Kashmir was redrawn in the fourteenth century by the induction of sultans over the Kashmir scene, this accommodation of head and heart received a jolt. Kashmiris became oblivious of their pristine past; present consequently got divorced from it, mutilating its brilliant face and its attendant decorum. During those unsavoury and all the more unpalatable times, Lalleshwari fortified to her marrow by the innate strength of her conviction, rose to the occasion and strove hard put to an end to this dismal era of persecution and vandalism. In this crusade her tools were not abjuration but affirmation; bitterness changed hands with sweet and more persuasive compromise. Having elected to tread this path of self-suffering, she became a model for millions of her country-men to abjure the mundane and propitiate the sublime. It was no less than a miracle by which the sufferings of the people lost their sting and they learnt to bear up with these with stoical resistance. They were exhorted to rise above the self and reach up to the super-self at which stage pleasure or pain have no relevance or meaning. Some say it was self-deceit, fleeing from the actual life, rather self-forgetfulness to feel shy of the stark realities of life. The most apt answer to this faulty assertion is provided by ever-awake Lalleshwari herself in these words:-

<verses>

"Some may heap cavil on me, even some may curse me; They may say whatever they like to say. Some may worship me with the flowers of inherent cognition; yet I do not feel ruffled with this kind of impeachment or praise, since I am concerned with my own self and do not grudge what others have to say about me."

Muslim rule over Kashmir, for reasons obvious, sounded the knell for the use and propagation of sanskrit language. Bilhana, the famous lyricist of Kashmir had once boasted that, "In their household the Kashmiri women even speak sanskrit and prakrit as fluently as their mother-tongue." It was now an old wooden story. However, a bridge was to be built between the present and the past for which sanskrit had been a very potent instrument; but the general public had lost contact with it. Persian was the order of the day in its stead. So, Lalleshwari chose to speak to the people in their own idiom; hence Kashmiri became the vehicle of her message. In this way, she did not only make her message more intelligible and comprehensible to the masses, but also achieved the purpose of bridging the gulf between the past and the present. Present is an improved version of the past providing the base on which future can be built. In her time the friction between the past and the present was the loudest; hence, she like an expert alchemist, by her healing touch saved Kashmiri culture from being eroded and bruised. Her clarion call to assimilate human values in the dark days won for her the esteem and acclaim of Hindus and Muslims alike and the edge of ruthless proselytisation got blunted. It was no mean achievement on her part in uniting the lost children of one God, when every effort was being made to segregate them from each other. Her message was so universal and appealing that the tallest of Muslim Reshis of Kashmir Sheikh Noor -ud -Din Noorani made her his ideal and expressed what he owed to her in these words:-

<verses>

"That Lalla of Padmpur (Pampur) was fortunate enough in gulping the ambrosial nectarine draughts; thereby she won our adoration as an incarnation of immortal Divinity. Benevolent God, grant me also such a boon."

Lalla's message couched in quatrains called 'Vaks' is very simple and straight bereft of any curves or terseness. It is actually an exhortation to man to indulge in self-cognition. It is a readymade manual on self- education and consequent self-consciousness.

<verses>

"I felt fatigued by imessant self-search, thinking that no body could partake of that hidden perceptive knowledge; I, ultimately got immersed into it and could find admission to the Divine-bar; therein the goblets are full to the brim, but none possesses the nerve to drink these."

Mental drill is preamble to self- consciousness. At that pinnacle of self- discipline mind gets tamed automatically effortlessly:-

<verses>

"The steed of mind gallops through the sky, encompassing this whole universe. During the twinkling of an eye it can traverse millions of miles. He, who is proficient enough to put it on rails by controlling its reins, check its wayward demeanour by clipping its wings in the shape of mastering his own inhalation and exhalation can attain the stage of self-cognition."

Worship, in the words of Lalla connotes self- introspection. It has nothing to do with external paraphernalia:-

<verses>

"Mind is the flower-seller and faith the flowers. Worship should be undertaken with the offerings of mental equipoise. Shiva is to be given a bath of tears. Incantations are to be recited in silence, without making a show of these. In this way only self-consciousness can be awakened from within."

According to Lalleshwari a realizer has to hammer out his mental attitude on these lines:-

<verses>

"He, who considers his own self and others as alike, abjures distinction between 'I' and 'you', He, who treats days and nights alike; is undisturbed by pleasure or pain. He, whose mind is bereft of duality, whose heart beats for all alike; only such a realizer can perceive the highest of preceptors-Shiva."

But, that shiva is within the self of the realizer, as inseparable from it as the smell from the flower. Immanence is self and transcendence is super-self-shiva in the language of Kashmiri monistic Shaivacharyas:-

<verses>

"Why do you beat your breast for nothing ? If you possess unwavering intelligence, you shall have to seek Him from within, Shiva is seated there and searching Him from outside will be of no avail. Do believe my word, baked with self- perception."

Without beating about the bush, it can be safely asserted that Lalleshwari's forte was Kashmiri Shaivism. This concept of Kashmirian philosophy actually revolutionized the age-long attitudes of man, more so of the Brahmins. It advocates a caste-less society as also abhors Kitchen-puritanism. Hindu society ailing through its own defective approach, justified such a kind of major operation for instilling evergreen health into its rusty veins. Shaiva scholars of Kashmir diagnosed the disease rightly and prescribed such an elixir for its longevity which defied the time with its nihilistic red claws. Had not this philosophy of life been at hand to the Kashmiris at that dismal hour of history, no Hindu worth the name, would have survived in the Land of 'Kashyapa', alien culture would have made an easy morsel of him. Lalla's Vaks, are actually a Kashmiri rendering of shiva sutras; When this philosophy was born, no such predicament was

there, as was faced by Lalleshwari in her own times later on. At best, shaivas had to contend with the Buddhists, whose attitude was also home-spun and not foreign in any way; Hence, Lalla had to reclaim the lost faith of her brethren, provide a viable alternative to the enticements an alien faith was offering to the people at large; and at the same time, in performing this double duty, she had to be always cross-fingered, not invite the wrath of the rulers. It definitely goes to her credit that while discharging her mission, she did not make a single enemy out of the other camp. To crown all, her message did cut through the man-made barriers of religions, Hindus as well as Muslims became her votaries with equal gusto. Her appeal was humanistic and not sectarian. Her approach was of positive affirmation and not of negative abjuration; consequently it multiplied her friends. Her ingenuity in steering safe between the two antagonistic factions is unsurpassed. She was instrumental in replacing call to steel by call to human conscience, consequently changing sourness to sweetness:-

<verses>

"We, human beings, did live in the past and we alone will be in the future also. From ancient times to the present, we have activated this world. Just like rising and setting of the sun, a usual routine, the immanent Shiva (jiva) will never be relieved of birth and death."

Lalleshwari did not preach any hard and fast religion, she even disdained ritual. She projected a way of life quite in harmony with our cultural traditions, in which a happy amalgam was made of what was good in Buddhism, Hinduism and even Islam:-

<verses>

"That transcendental- self may assume the names of Shiva, Visnu, Buddha or Brahma; I am concerned only With their efficacy in cutting asunder my worldly affections, which might be accomplished by any one of these."

Therefore, it follows from this, that she was not dogmatic or rigid either. She welcomed the healthy wafts of wind coming from any direction whatsoever, anointing her body and soul with chaste Divinity. She always kept the windows of her mind open, rejecting what was mundane and assimilating the sublime:-

<verses>

"The Super- Lord is supervising His shop with personal care. All the aspirants are eager to take away wares of their liking. Whatever, you would elect to buy, does not admit of any intermediary; It is to be earned by your own effort, since the shop is devoid of any hinderance and even a watch is not kept over it."

This is the acme of Lalla's message. Man has been exhorted to seek his own self front within, without any external aids. Self-effort is precursor of self- education finally culminating in self-consciousness - Shiva - as she calls it.

As long as the silvery bellows of the Vitasta maintain their rejuvenating rhythm, as long as the virgin snow on the Himalayan heights retains its unblemished splendour and stature, the exquisite 'Vaks' of Lalleshwari soaked to the full in the inherent values of Kashmiri culture and human understanding will go on, unimpeded of course, in providing dignity to man to recognize his own self and not to run after deluding shadows; since the culture of a land never dies, the message of Lalla portraying meaningfully the humanistic attitudes ingrained in our culture, will never grow stale. Its fragrance and flavour are evergreen.

Source: Glimpses of Kashmiri Culture

7.5 Key to the understanding of Lal Ded

R. N. Koul

7.5.1 Introduction

It is common knowledge that Lalla Ded (1320-1389) lived in the fourteenth century. This was the most unfavourable time for the cultivation of mystical powers lying dormant in our beings. The Happy Valley was passing through traumatic events of political and religious turmoil. Sandwiched between the two extremes of orthodox Brahmanism and aggressive Islam (due to some fanatics) there emerged a tradition or 'cult' engendered by Hindu mystics and Muslim sufis of the time. It was in reality the resurgence of an indigenous tradition of the unique Kashmiri psyche known for its tolerance, secularism, universal brotherhood and love, in short, of humanism. In this synthesis of cultures Lalla Ded was destined to play a leading role. Her special contribution to this synthezation was to give it a mystical content. She was closely followed by Sheikh- Noor-ud-din (1376-1438). Both, she in her vaakh and he in his srukh emphasized the importance of over-coming the senses and the wavering mind and concentrating on Sadhana (meditation) as a means to attain salvation, the merging of individual soul with the Universal Consciousness. It really meant the realizing of the Divine in one's own being. This tradition of mystic ecstasy was continued, enriched and strengthened by later mystic poets and poetesses like Rupa Bhawani, Parmanand (1791-1874), Shams Fakir (1834-1904), Abdul Ahad Zargar and a host of others.

The secret of Lalla Ded's perennial appeal lies in her power to translate into metaphors and symbols the longing of man to know ('the burthen and the mystery'), to feel, at least vicariously, one with the infinite, the supreme power that inheres in all things. Her outbursts are clothed in her verse-sayings so succinctly and yet so communicatively that these have continued to hold us as if under a spell. That charm and that appeal are like Keats's "magic casements" to make the Solider- Scholar Temple utter:

***Thine is a- song that enslaveth me,
Son of an alien kin and clime.***

Shiekh Noor-ud Din wrote:

***The Lalla of padmanpur-
She drank her fill of divine nectar,
She was indeed an avatar of ours,
Oh God, grant me the self-same boon.***

Shamas Fakir has this to say:

***Lalla merged her prana in the Transcendent.
While she went to bathe
At the sacred shrine of shurahyar bank,
With a leap into the water
She swam across to meet her God.***

Lalla Ded's perennial appeal stems from the fact that she spoke in the idiom of the masses, the vernacular kashmiri and not in Sanskrit. She in fact, became the founder of modern Kashmiri, the Kashmiri that with slight changes down the years, continues to retain the infrastructure of Lalla's making.

But the essentiality of Lalla Ded's appeal lies in her mystical experience or anubhav clothed in nearly intelligible languages. Though she did not give rise to any order as such and did not present any systematized philosophy, yet the direction of her sayings in unmistakable, an

ethico-mystical message is inescapable. There is a method in her 'madness' or personal ecstasy. She lays down a moral code and prescribes rules for attaining spiritual salvation.

The present article is an attempt to explain, in as simple a manner as humanly possible, the technique Lalla Ded followed to reach her destination: discovering the Supreme residing in the depths of her own soul. She adopted the theory and practice of Trika 'Sastra' called Kashmir Shaivism, The technique has a physiological mystical content. It adopts the Laya Yoga though other yogas exist like Hatta Yoga, Mantra Yoga, Jnana Yoga and Bakhti Yoga. In Kashmiri the Laya Yoga is called the kundalini Yoga. According to this yoga there are six Cakras (Chakras) or centres of Cosmic power in the human body. The Kundalini Sakti is supposed to lie coiled round the svayambhu (the genital part) at the muladhara Cakra. This Sakti is roused through yogis exercises or mantras and brought up through the six circles to the highest centre, the Sahasrara, the abode of Siva. A kind of mystical bridge is established to help the Kundalini Shakti to reach this highest point. There exists a nadi (in the abstract) called Sushumna nadi which enables the practiser to reach this seat of Siva and enjoy the mystical taste of nectar oozing from Shashikala, Digit of the Moon. To understand it better one has to become more familiar with Kashmir Sahivism. Parmasiva is the highest metaphysical principle of this system. It has two aspects: one, the static, the eternal changeless and Pure Consciousness, two, the dynamic, the one in constant flux. The first is named Siva, the second Shakti, the two being one and the same. Man's spiritual goal is to establish identity of the two in his own being. This effort is obstructed by the power of the senses and the waywardness of the mind over our higher existence. The world is like a magnetic illusion and the hold of the senses is so strong that man lives many lives to seek their satisfaction. And the most formidable task for the seeker of the Infinite according to the Laya yoga is that he has to die (control his/her senses) and know the Supreme Self while alive. The mind can be controlled through the vital energy of consciousness centered in the body in the form of Susumna nadi, the uneven movement of prana and apana is brought to a uniform rhythm by breath control. The Susumna nadi extends from the muladhara at the base near the rectum right up to Sahasrara in the crown of the head along the spinal cord. It is through this subtle mystical corridor that Kundalini Sakti rises upwards to meet her consort Siva in that thousand-petalled lotus of Sahasrara Within these two extremes are six centres of energy called cakras or lotuses. These are:

1. Muladhar - at the base of the spinal cord.
2. Suadhishsthana - at the base of the reproductive organ
3. Manipur - in the region of the navel
4. Anahata - in the region of the heart
5. Visudha - near the throat
6. Ajna - between the two eyebrow

There are two other nadis running parallel to the Susumna. These are ida and pingla. Prana flows through the former while apana flows through the latter. The two breaths are kept in perfect balance through the practice of yoga. All the channels (nadis) join at the two eyebrows' junction; this point is called Triveni, symbolic confluence of Ganga, Jamuna and Saraswati. The Kundalini Sakti which normally lies dormant is awakened by yogic exercises and it then cuts its way through the six cakras to meet 'her' consort Shiva in Sahasrara, Prana goes upwards while apana downwards. To attain spiritual goal, man has to control five pranas, ten indriyas and their controller, the wavering mind. This is done through abhyas or yoga practice. Prana rises at the heart and ends at a distance of twelve fingers from the nose. To attain absolute control, the mystic syllable OM is repeated with rise and fall of breath as it travels through - subtle channels another mantra is called hamsah. This mantra enables the yogis to concentrate. At each of these points there occurs a split second in which prana remains still. It is this interval which brings the seeker to the abode of Siva. The unstuck sound of anahata or OM coincides with

hamsa. There is complete merger of man's soul with Universal Soul; then there is an ecstatic revelation that the two are in reality one:

***Through the central channel of Susumna
I reached the sanctum sanctorum of my own soul
And lo! I beheld Siva and Sakti sealed in one.
Feeling ecstatic I reached the nectar-lake of the mystic moon
Apparently dead, I am now really alive.***

The same anubhawa is expressed in another telling vaakh:

***I held firm the reins of the horse, my mind,
I controlled well the pranas coursing through the ten nadis;
Then did the nectar of the mystic moon
Melt and flow, suffusing my whole being,
The mind thus curved,
My void merged with the void of pure consciousness.***

Thus Lalla Ded, without rejecting the flesh altogether but accepting it only as a necessary evil, found her spiritual salvation within her own self.

***I discovered the Lord
Within the walls of my own soul.***

7.5.2 Life and Legend

It is not only natural but almost imperative to blend fact with legend when dealing with the lives of saints or mystics. Miracles become integral parts of their messages or of their personal experiences. Even if no miracles occur, it is sometimes necessary to invent some in order to brighten the halos round their heads and then great saints, mystics and prophets become God's instruments to bring under discipline the moral and spiritual and even secular lives of men and women living on this planet of ours. These miracles become proofs of their spiritual powers or of their powers of endurance and self-restraint. Divested of these their lives become dull studies and their messages fail to convince the masses.

Little is historically known about Lalla's life. She lived in the fourteenth century (1320? to 1389?) as the oral tradition declares. She was born and brought up in the reign of Alau-ud-Din (1344-55) and died in the reign of Sultan Shihabud Din (1355-73). Her name is first mentioned in 1654 by Baba Dawud Mushkati in his *Asrarul-Abrar* (The secret of the Pious). Then followed her mention in *Waqiate Kashmir* completed in 1746. Some names testify to her life and to her miracles. Her vaakhs too furnish some internal evidence to her existence and to some of the hardships she had to undergo. That her immediate successor, the mystic Sheikh Noorud Din Noorani (1377-1438) should mention Lalla's name in one of his outbursts confirms her existence. It is said that she fed the newly born babe (Sheikh Noorud Din) at her motherly breast and that he became her disciple in the mystic lore and experience.

Hence it follows that the legends that are associated with her name are things taken for granted by the people. In all hagiologies, whether written or handed down through tradition, it is that the miracles associated with a saint assume greater significance. In fact though never verified these miracles establish the greatness of these aints in peoples' hearts. In this no rational analysis can be offered. The 'bluish something' as Gandhi called Lord Krishna lifted the hill Goverdhan on His little finger; Hanumana brought an entire mountain from the Himalayan ranges to the southern shores of Bharat; Christ walked the waves and brought the dead to life. And Lal Ded remembered her past janamas (lives) as a woman giving birth to a son, in another janama getting born as a filly at village Marhom. The filly died and was reborn as a pup at Vejibror. There a tiger killed the filly in the disguise of a pup. This was verified by Lalla's guru Sidha

Shrikanth. All the cycle of birth and death was repeated the seventh time at Pandrethan. She was born at Sempore near Pampore and at the age of 12 was married to Nika (Sona) Bhat of Drangbal near Pampore. Her vaakhs tell us of Lalla Ded's belief in transmigration of the soul. She refers to her herself having witnessed the whole valley being changed into a vast lake from Hannukha in the north-west to Konsar Nag in the south of Kashmir. Was she alive during the period when the valley was Sati Sar?

But it is after her marriage that more miracles and legends begin to gather round her life. Born and brought up till her marriage in an atmosphere of learning that she obtained in her parent's home. Lalla became a mistress of the spiritual lore, of the Bhagwad Gita, of tantric practices prevalent at the time, especially of Trika Shastra or what is Popularly known as Kashmir Shaivism. She had learnt and imbibed certain spiritual sadhanas before she was locked in marital relationship with Nika Bhat. In picking up Laya Yoga, the inspiration and guidance of Sidha Mol, her family guru, must have been extra-ordinary indeed. In those days girls were married even before they attained puberty and the marital communication took place when the girl had advanced far beyond her teens. It is therefore safe to assume that at her in-laws' Lalla continued her Sadhana. In those days the atmosphere at the in-laws for a maiden daughter-in-law was naturally conservative and extremely orthodox. And it must have been particularly suffocating for the spiritually and aesthetically sensitive Lalita, who had now become Padmavati. Her beloved was Sankara, and estrangement between the husband and wife must have surfaced much earlier. The villains of the peace must have been

(i) the malignant and proverbially harsh mother-in-law and

(ii) Lalla's own sadhana which must have made her averse to sensual indulgence. The mother-in-law's behaviour has given rise to another legend. The father-in-law is generally generous and of caring nature whereas the mother-in-law is only practising the persecution she herself must have home at the hands of her own mother-in-law. And the son is always led by the nose by the mother acting as the wire-puller at the 'puppet show'. The story goes that Lalla's mother-in-law would invariably conceal a stone (nilavath) beneath the small fare of rice that was Lalla's share. And she gulped down the little rice without any grumbling. Had she complained, she would have been shown the door. Hence Lalla moans- they may have mutton, but for Lalla the stone is the only fare.

We can imagine how Lalla's endurance must have exhausted the vindictive powers of her mother-in-law. She took recourse to other more reprehensible tricks. It was Lalla's habit to rise early go to the ghat with an earthen pitcher under her arm and before collecting water, she would spend time on ablutions and yogic exercises like breath control etc., while going across to the temple of Natakeshaw Bhairaw. The mother-in-law had insinuated to her son that Lalla was not faithful to him. And on one fine morning another miracle occurred. Her husband waited for Lalla to return, with the firm resolve to shove her out of his home. He had his diabolical form and his stick behind the door. As Lal Ded approached, Nika Bhat struck the pitcher. It is believed that the pitcher broke into pieces but the water content remained intact in a frozen state. Lalla filled each household pot with water till not a drop more was needed. The broken pitcher was flung outside where at once a fresh water spring appeared. This spring is now dried up but to this day it is called Laila Trag (trag means "pond"). As the historian Pir Ghulam Hassan has stated, this spring went dry in 1925-26.

The miracle of the pitcher turned out to be a watershed in Lalla's relationship with her in-laws and in her much more important relationship with the Supreme Consciousness. By this time most probably she had still to receive the 'word', the occult, rather cryptic or esoteric light from her guru as to what course she should adopt to know the Eternal in her own Self. She left her in-laws for good and took to wandering as an ascetic, a sanyasin in search of Enlightenment. The

story goes that she wandered almost naked like a mad person who does not care for any formality of dress. The legend goes that her lul or belly protruded forward, bent itself to cover her private parts. People therefore forgot her original maiden name of Lalita (shortened to Lalla in Kashmir) and began to call her Lalla Ded/Lal Ded, the granny with the belly dangling down. This is surely hearsay and cannot be reconciled to the fact that she was christened Lalita. Muslims later on claimed her conversion to Islam and called her Lalla Arifa. But the reality is that all kinds of stories and legends grew up as time massed on and threw a pall of obscurity on the period during which she lived her life. Yes, for her the Hindu ritualistic system became meaningless to find the Source in her own body. Distinctions between religions and castes became redundant for the mystic of Lalla's stature:

<verses>

The Lord pervades everywhere, There is nothing like Hindu or Musalman; (All distinctions melt away) If thou art wise, know thyself, Seek the Lord within.

The legend of the belly bulging downwards appears to be mischievously invented because if Lalla Ded were moving naked in the streets how could she have incarnated herself as the Muse of knowledge or, more precisely speaking, as the Muse of Poetry. If true, the legend confirms her miraculous powers.

And finally the legend associated with her mahasamadhi, getting freed from the mortal coil of her body and getting blissfully merged with that which shall last for ever-the Infinite Soul, Lalla's Siva. When claimed by both the Hindus and the Muslims alike, Lalla performed a postmortem miracle. There arose a flame of light from her dead body and without anyone realizing what was happening, it vanished into the void

"shoonyas shoonyaa meelith gav"

Many such miracles are associated with the mahasamadhis of saints and mystics or even prophets. Christ's body left the Cross and ascended as if divinely winged to the abode of the Lord to be resurrected again. Sant Kabir's corpse proved mystically elusive to the Muslims and to the Hindus who were fighting each other to claim it for their distinctive funeral rites. It is said that Mira Bhai's soul merged with the idol of Ranchodeshji making the body invisible. Lalla Ded is said to have attained Nirvana in 1389 or so. But her metaphors which clothe her mystical practice in the form of vaakh continue to inspire mankind.

[The author, Prof. R.N. Kaul, former Principal, is one of our veteran scholars of English and a fine writer, well-known for his book on Shiekh Mohd. Abdullah. He lives in Jammu.]

Source: Patrika

7.6 Laleshwari - Bio-Data and Background Information

P. N. Razdan (Mahanori)



Laleshwari (1320 AD - 1390 A.D) Born at Pandraethan Village (ancient Puranadhithana)

Lal ded was married at the age of twelve to one Pandit boy at Pampore (ancient Padmanpora) where presumably she was renamed Padmawati, as per the Kashmiri Pandit tradition, by her-in-laws.

Ref: Nunda Reshi's Shruik:

*The Lalia of Padmanpora,
Gulp by gulp Amrit who drank,
who saw Shiva face to face everywhere:
Grant me too that boon,
O. Lord Shiva!*

C/p Tran (JLK P. 88)

The Hindus called her Laleshwari and the Muslims Lalla Arifa. But both endearingly called her Lal DED (Grandmother or Grandma). This is certain and continues as such to date.

Note: Lal in Kashmiri means an unnatural growth internal or external, bodily projection. Lalla's belly had grown like a hanging lump of fleshy cloak down to her knees.

In the absence of authentic historical records there seems to be much confusion about the exact dates of her birth and death. According to Noor Namas and Reshi Namas she was born sometime between 1300- 1320 A.D. and died round about 1377 A.D.

The renowned, modern historian Sh. P.N. Kaul, Bamzai, puts it in the middle of the 14th Century. Some put her year of birth as 1335 A.D. and Prof. C.L.Sapru locates, her date of birth in 1360 A.D. These sources and recently, "Kashmir: Behind the Vale". record her year of demise as 1377 A.D.

One is unable-to recollect the dates recorded, if any, in a Persian booklet (Issar-ul-Ibrar) which I had studied, with the help of a Persian knowing friend, long ago, as desired by J & K Academy of Art, Culture and Languages to focus attention on the vegetarian aspect of the most popular Kashmiri saint, Nund Reshi, whose shrine at Chrari- Sharief is thronged by devotees, both Hindus and Muslims, everyday and who is said to have been her spiritual heir.

According to these conflicting, approximate presumptions, the date of Lalla's demise, 1377 A.D. coincides with the year of birth of Sheikh Noor-ud-Din Noorani. Thus the contention doesn't seem to stand on firm ground and is self-contradictory. As is well known, both Lal Ded and Nunda Reshi were, quite discernibly contemporaries for quite sometime. After extensive study and intensive research work, in 'LAL DED 1973 Prof. J.L. Koul opines that the dates of birth and death of Lalleshwari was some time between (B 1317-20 A D) & (d 1387-90 A D) These dates seem to be in consonance with Circumstantial evidence and hence more authentic and nearest the truth.

Extensive and intensive research work by youthful scholars in collaboration with experts is the need of the hour to arrive at logically and correct dates of birth and death of both Lal Ded and Nund Reshi.

7.6.1 MATRIMONIAL RELATIONS AND RELATIONSHIPS

Lal Ded could not be and was no exception to the common lot of womanhood, the world over in general and Indian womenfolk in particular. Her mother-in-law, perhaps as a means of cathartic projection of her own experience, often incited her son against his wife. Being unintelligent and too dull to observe and appreciate the nobility of Lalleshwari and the divine sparks in her, he would thoughtlessly slight and perplex her. Lal Ded remained ill-treated and ill-fed despite the family control of her affectionate father-in-law.

Lalla's hypocritical mother-in-law was cunning and tricky. She would usually place a large round shingle underneath the cooked rice in her plate at lunch and dinner-time to display her deceptive affection for Lal Ded and, at the same time, to show to others how hefty the latter was. Lalleshwari would always finish eating quickly the scanty rice, wash her plate and the pebble and deposit them at their specified places before attending to other chores.

She would not utter a word of protest, much less complain against such a strange way of ill-treatment, but take every care to shield her husband as well as mother-in-law and their honour.

Once, while carrying a pail of water on her head from a brook, Lalleshwari was intercepted by her husband. He fell upon her, breaking to pieces the earthen pot with a rod. The pieces fell to the ground but the water remained frozen pitcher shaped at its place. After filling all the vessels at home, she asked her stunned mother-in-law if there were any other vessels to be filled. On getting a negative reply, Lalleshwari threw the remaining water out at a place which later came to be known as Lalla-Trag (marsh) It has dried up since.

Such a particular aspect of self-denial, patience, self discipline and forbearance are unparalleled in human behaviour.

However, once on a festive occasion while filling a pitcher at the river ghat, she was asked by her girl friends what the festivity and merriment at her home was all about. She said

"Whether they slaughter a ram or a lamb, Lalla will never miss her shingle".

The allusion to her routine travail is reflective of the stress of circumstantial exasperation seeping into her delicate demeanor and ticking her divine leanings. This led Lalleshwari slowly and steadily to resort to secret spiritual practices deep sadhana and yoga in seclusion. A highly talented and reputed scholar yogi of the time, Sidha Sri Kanth (Seddha Mol) of Srinagar became her guru.

"He whose senses are under control attains the status of a place of pilgrimage", says Abhinav gupta.

Accordingly, Lalleshwari lived a life of purity guided by the discipline of the doctrine and principles of yogic philosophy. Her experiences matured, knowledge deepened and transformed

the ascetic in her into a yogini of the highest order". Says Yoganandaji Maharaj. "Lalleshwari is the supreme mistress of Yoga "Thus, purified by the crystal clear waters of Vedanta, it seems, and drinking the milk of Upanishadic thought, she invigorated and revitalised the Trika-Philosophy, the three fold science of an individual, his immediate and remote environment in the universe, pervaded by the supreme energy in its totality (To use Swami Laxmanji's interpretation).

Says Lalleshwari:

***Shiva's present everywhere.
Where lies the creek to distinguish
Between a Hindu and a Mussalman?
Quick witted if you are,
Recognise yourself and realise God !
- Commentary on Lall Vaakh No 1***

Lord Shiva is almighty all pervading, Omnipresent Omniscient and exists in the very electric charges pulsating in the nucleus of even the smallest atoms of matter and seeped in all that exists universally in material or immaterial substances, perceptible or imperceptible to bodily senses or special sensations as well as in the mysteries of emptiness or the secrets of the Wilderness of the Void in boundary less space crowned by a bejewelled emerald blue skies presided over by the model of sobriety the Puran-Mashi full moon that shine and emit serene soft light to dispel and twinkle off the dreadful darkness of gloomy nights and lulls us to a pleasant, dreamless sleep after scorching summer days. And the glaring bright sun, projects forth warmth bearing light to sustain biological life and causes phenomenal, natural changes in the atmosphere, hydraulic cycles as well as physico-chemical actions and reactions, continental drifts and storage of energy in various forms, known or unknown, all for uniform benefit of life on earth without any distinctions or discriminations of any kind what-so-ever.

Lalleshwari's concept of Shiva's universal presence or Omniscience combined with the qualities of evenness, truth, goodness and beauty enjoin upon us to follow her didactic message of imbibing the qualities of impartiality of judgment, indiscriminating attitude towards all, equality, equanimity, love and affection for the socio-economic, socio-political as well as socio-cultural and religious harmony. Hence she says,

***"Shiva is Omnipresent
Distinguish not between a Hindu
and a Mussalman"***

For they say. 'Love begets love', and may I add 'Evil begets evil'.

And the latter is too contagious to control and disturbs the mind, raises tempers, causes tensions, leading to violence that becomes a perpetual source of turmoil and threat to life and property—a life of chaos and Vagrancy.

How apt is the age-old Kashmiri saying.

***I bought nettle transplanted it,
But-alas! I myself became the first Victim.
of its painful pricks.***

Hence, the truth of Shiva is Omnipresent (Omniscience). Distinguish not between a Hindu and a Mussalman!

Note: Besides its other interpretations, this Vaakh reflects the ethical and metaphysical aspects of her systematic spiritual life.

C/P JLK 57 NKK 57

C/P Parallel NSP No One P.P. No. 1/

7.6.2 *Guru Shishya Discussion*

The following discussion between the Guru and his disciples should be of interest to the reader:

Once, Lal Ded's husband approached her guru, Sedha Mol, requesting him to help make Lal Ded return home, The guru agreed and the discussions that took place included an interesting interlogue.

Husband:

*No light equals the light of the sun,
No pilgrimage is there like the one
To the Ganga
No relative excels a brother, and
No comfort is there like that of a wife!*

Sedha Mol:

*No, light parallels the light of
One's eyes;
No pilgrimage is there, like
the one, on one's knees.
No relative's better than one's own pocket, and
No comfort is there, like a warm blanket:*

Lal Ded:

*There is no light like
The knowledge of ultimate TRUTH,
No pilgrimage, like the one
of the love of the Supreme,
No relative like the Lord himself,*

7.6.3 *Commentary to Lalla Vaakh*

a) Unlike the English word 'Nude' equivalent to the English word 'naked' which is used in Kashmiri in multipurpose senses.

i) Without normal apparel

ii) Scantily dressed

iii) Sparsely appareled

iv) Unmindful of dress worn by lady irrespective of the normals of time.

b) Likewise the Kashmiri word is double meaning equivalent to roaming about or dancing.

c) Kashmiri phrase '*nangai natchun*' apparently seems to be current rumour for common people like us.

d) Despite the popular notion of the vertically downward projection of Lalla's belly into a fleshy lump to cover her private organ may or may not be a fact. For, in the light of her spiritual perfection, it seems controversially irrational and incongruous. For, her short or affectionate pet name of address and the surrounding neighbourhood must certainly also have been 'LALA' (or 'LALAI' etc. in feminist accent) and the same probably followed her in her in-law's house.

The inspiring cue of my interpretation came from Prof. J.L. Koul's scholarly book 'LALDED' of 1973.

For, for her Gurus 'Gur-Shabad' i.e. her Guru's advice

"Draw within from without, tickled Lallehwari's' spiritually susceptible inclination and she at once by a reflex action withdrew from without to merrily delve down deep into the domain of her choice to probe into the depths of her inner soul. Absorbed thus she roamed about the depths of her soul in relation to her body and the super soul called Almighty Lord. The process advanced in a happy concentrated mood in dancing and trekking to reach and analyse the truth of ultimate reality of the focus of the energy of the energies of which only a few of such energy rays are known to us in the form of heat, height, etc. In this way she almost became one -with the Lord of the Universe the source of eternal dynamism of the Universe."

Hence the rumour of is simply a misnomer.

And, no comfort like

The fear of God:

C/P & contrast LAL DED by JLK published by Sahetya Academy of 1973 page 18.

7.6.4 The Turning Point

Lallehwari's bubbling desire of spiritualism and her innate leanings towards the spirit, had drawn her to a high ranking, reputed Sadaki and realised Yogni by Guru Sedha Mol as said before . He administered her with his Guru Shabad- (Guiding directive). This ultimately Proved to be her fuming point.

Says Lallehwari.

***My Guru gave me but one Gurashabad;
He told me to move within from without.
That hit my (Lalla's) Nail, on the head;
I realised myself and shed off the veil;
Self realised, I began to dance
In freedom.***

C/P JLK 21, NKK 21 or 3(a)

***My Guru whispered into my ear
But one Guru Shabad;
He asked me to seek myself
Within myself, not without,
The magic worked,
I become free and,
Began dancing in
Blissful Boom:***

***What use to me are
Those fives, tens-and elevens
Who lick cooking kettles and go away
If we gather together and pull
The same rope, in the same direction,
Then, how can a single cow
Elude eleven of us?***

***Thou are the sky, the earth and air,
Thou the day and night;
Thou art the grain, flowers and sandalwood,
Thee, the water, universe, all;***

***Then what remains to adorn thee with
O. Lord ?***

C/O JLK 70, NKK 70.

***No need's there of garden, flowers
Oil lamps, water or sesamum:
He, Go with faith and Bhakti
Heartily trusts his Guru's word.
And, of his own volition,
Contemplates on Shiva,
He'll do what he says
With ease!***

CIP JLK 67, NKK 67

***With a florist's heart and
Abiding faith,
Offer Him thy flowers of Bhakti:
In bone with sacred Mantras use
A 'Naeri Kalush ' to pour the nectar of
Obeisance on Him;
Thy mute prayers to Shiva'll thus
Heed, thy Soul:***

C/P Vaakh No 6,7 ,11 Shruk No Poem i/10, IV 4 XV (15,6)

C/P JLK 69, NKK 69.

Note: The two Vaakh, 6&7 and, the chronology of her existence testify to her being the pioneer and forerunner of the Bhakti movement of India.

***Salvation 'ld I obtain
Even while living
A Social life, day and night:
Ever beloved of the gods are
Those, that live for others
(OR Those That are selfless :)***

C/P Shruk No 4,5 Poem No XI/3

C/P JLK 110, NKK 110

***Exhausted I was, seeking myself
Within myself;
Co'cooned around me was
The secret of mystic knowledge
Tended and rocked it till
I attained my goal:
Found I there, pitchers and pitchers
Of nectar but, --- no drinkers***

C/P JLK 99 NKK 99

***Thou art within me
And without:
I contemplated, scanned and
Analysed myself and thee:***

A century later, Sant Kabir gave vent to a similar spiritual experience in one of his dohas:

*The more you observe the red glow-
Of my red pearl, the redder (beloved)
It becomes;
I went to see the redness,
And, I too fumed red*

A double century later, Mira Bai burst into song:

*None but Girdhar Gopal
Is mine,*

Thus she too bathed in the sunshine of one God.

Century after century from 14th century onwards, Lalleshwari and Nund Reshi were followed by Ramananda, Kabir, Guru Nanak, Mira Bai all, high-ranking saints of the Bhakti Movement. While Tulsi Das (contemporary of Akbar) composed Ramayana, Mira Bai took solace in Lord Krishna who was her Girdhar Gopal.

However, the honour of being the first scribe of the Kashmiri language in the form of Mahany Prakash, goes to Shitikanth. Lalleshwari is credited with laying the reinforced concrete basis of the language by her dexterous coinage of apt idioms and proverbs to infuse life and dynamism into it from its very infancy. The language, thus enriched and ornamented by lively idiom pregnant proverb, depth of philosophical thought and messages of social welfare and peace, became the main vehicle of communication of ideas among the Kashmiri people.

Her cryptic, terse sayings still continue to enliven scholarly discussion and resolve social problems.

7.6.5 Votary of Vegetarianism and critic of animal sacrifice

*O, you dull pandit, you offer
A living ram to a lifeless stone,
It'll cover you in woollens.
And shield you against cold;
It'll feed on water and natural grass,
And crumbs:
Who has advised you to sacrifice
A live-lamb as an offering
To a dead rock ?*

C/P JLK 65. NKK 65

*The stone that forms the temple
and the prayer hall,
The very same stone forms
The sanctum sanctorum.
And the rolling mill:
Shiva is hard to reach,
Take the cue:*

C/o JLK 66, NKK66.

7.6.6 Commentary for Vakayas No 11, 12

As a Shaivite, mistress yogni, the Divine for Lalleshwan is NIRANKAR formless, limitless, boundless, timeless, changeless, non-conceivable (mentally or physically), non--confined to any place and yet, not non-existent anywhere, either. To her, God is one absolute Truth, infinite and Omnipresent, all pervading. She has realised her inner sun and moon in objectless, self-consciousness, vacuum, nothingness (void, emptiness and essence of cosmic consciousness.

Lalleshwari is firm on NIRGUNA aspect of godhood, without any attributes, qualities, objectives or " personifications such as, God is gracious, merciful, just or great, as against its complementary SAGUNA counterpart, wherein visual or verbal images are used as catalysts of concentration on the focussing object, both as mental or material images so usually used by the followers of different religious sects in one form or the other as rightly noted by the author of "Negationism in India ", by an European scholar.

But all such limiting boundaries thin out and vanish automatically as a sadakh draws within from without, probes his inner-self and is self-realised. Refer to L.V .44 etc. and Vaakh Trio	(a) Specific :1/57. (21/89).22/118. 27/127. 30/130. 30-A/130. 35/84. 37/58(44/134) (45/133). 51/103.54/102. 55/112.
Lalded by JLK 1973.	(b) 13/116.28/24. 29/7. 32/14. 33/68. 34/69. 40/113. 46
NKK 1988	(c) 5/70. 9/99. 10.23/1
N. Reshi	1.2.6.21. etc.
P. Poems	1st/4,5,9,19,25,.etc.
European authors	" <i>Negatonism in India</i> " Pages 154 to 165 (only Photostat copy of these pages available with me).
Kalyan Kalpataru,	1993 (Pages 555-557.571-72)
The Journal Of Poetry Society India 1993, Vol 3, No.1 Page. 27	Whereas saguna form of worship may appear to be analogous to a growing infant or child seeking sustenance and shelter from and rushing to his mother's lap for consolation and comfort, in NIRGUNA. A Yogi seeks liberation of his soul from bondage, to become one with the. Supreme Soul.

On studying L.V. Number 11 and 12 along with L. V. Number 1,3,5, 6 one gets the impression that Lalleshwari abhors the grotesqueness and irrationality of animal sacrifice in which, a living lamb is killed as an offering to a non-living stone idol, the focussing object of worship or likewise, the depletion of aesthetics in and, irreverential installation of the focussing symbols do not seem to be in good taste.

Lalleshwari was a thought provoking saint-poetess, profound Shaivite philosopher. deep thinker, creative artist and the builder of the Kashmiri language. She has been and still continues to be

an unmatched sage, seer, sadakh par excellence. As such she relieves in nirankari Divinity and nirguna type of worship and Sadhana as observed above. She is a ruthless critic of ritual religion and, worship too. And yet, says she:

***With a florist's heart and
Abiding faith
Offer him the flowers of BHAKTI.***

7.6.7 IMMORTALITY AND THE PHILOSOPHY OF EQUALITY

***Shiva is omnipresent,
Distinguish not between
A Hindu and a Mussalman***

***We existed ever before and'll exist for ever;
We permeate all, did so earlier and'll
Continue prevailing all, for ever;
The immortal soul shuttles between life and death,
The sun ceases not rising and setting.
nor is it destroyed:
Siva ceases not coming and going:***

C/P JLK 116, NKK 116.

Thus does this versatile genius of a Yogni and poetess of eminence communicate her enlightened experience on the path of self-recognition and the 'thrill of self consciousness' and widening vision to quote late Swami Laxmani.

***Hefty eating in quick succession'll
Lead you no where:
Meagre eating or non-eating'll
excite your ego;
Be moderate in food and
moderate you'll be in everything.
Sustained moderation'll open the doors of
Warm Welcome for you;***

C/P JLK 27, NKK 270

i) According to Washington report 4 (INA) from the National Institute of Aging, Baltimore, less eating prevents incidence of aging by controlling against diseases.

ii) Also read L.V. Number 41.

Sadhana without the purity of spirit in action has no meaning for Lalleshwari, Sadhana, without the removal of the cloak of evil, bears no fruit, Lalleshwari skillfully conveys the ticklish message by blaming herself rasher than others in the matter (C/P also Vaakh No. 48)

***Learning by rote, my tongue and palate
Dried .
That thou art my destiny.
I found not the right way
To act and reach thee.
Telling the beads,
My thumb and finger
Wore out; and yet, my friend
I couldn't get rid of
The duality of mind:
C/P JLK 44 NKK 44***

Note :- A Persian couplet quoted in the preface comfortably comes to my mind again right now saying

There's no righteousness except in the service of man.

*And respect, for all life:
Spiritualism doesn't establish itself by
telling the heeds, prayer and kneeling alone:
Nor does it impress by donning
A Hermit's robes*

7.6.8 MULTI FACETED PROFUNDITY OF LALLA'S VAAKHS

Lalleshwari seems to have delved deep into the realms of her self-consciousness guided by sparkling rays of the inner, master Sun, which reveals the ultimate Truth, gifts one with the right choice of inspiring words of wisdom that kill all evil and pain, of every kind, cool and compose the soul and delight the mind with intuitive foresight and divine discrimination and discernment.

Let the reader relish and estimate for himself/herself the sweetness of expression and profundity of divine, social and cultural message in the foregoing and the following Vaakhs of Lal Ded.

*Underneath your very feet. is
A concealed ditch,
And you are dancing over't
Tell me dear, how does your
Mind allow it ? How do you like it?
Your life long collections, all
You have to leave behind
Tell me dear, how
Do you relish your food?*

Ref. Trans (JLK3) NKK3.

*The flesh of my feet stuck to
The Tracks
only one showed me, the only
One path to the only ONE
Even if those, that hear this
May go mad:
From hundreds of path., Lalla
Chose only but one:*

Ref. Trans (JLK 87 NKK87)

7.6.9 The Finale:

Towards the late seventies or eighties of the fourteenth Century A. D. Lalleshwari is said to have gone to Bijbehara town in Anantnag district in South Kashmir. There, her soul said to have left her physical body to merge into the Supreme Soul

A dispute is said to have arisen between the Hindus and the Muslims, the former wanting to cremate the body according to Hindu rites whereas the latter wanted to bury it according to the Muslim, code. For she was the grandma Lal Ded for all irrespective of creed or status in life.

Appreciating the sentiments, the spirit of the yogini is said to have asked those present to bring two large washbasins. The body is said to have sat inside one and inverted the other over her head. Thereafter the body is stated to have shrunk slowly till the two washbasins overlapped.

After sometime of those present are said to have ventured to remove the upper washbasin. They found there nothing but a liquid formation. Half of the liquid is said to have been taken by the Hindus for cremation and the other half by the Muslims for burial adjacent to the local Jama Masjid .

An analogous episode is said to have repeated itself more than a century later on the demise of Sant Kabir. After a similar dispute over the mode of disposal of the body, the, saint's corpse kept in the coffin is said to have turned into flower-petals, half of which were cremated by the Hindus and the other half buried by the Muslims.

For the present, it will be enough to conclude the discussion with a quotation from a modern scribe, Fida Mohd Husain, recently published book entitled: "The Beautiful Kashmir Valley" published by Rima publishing House New Delhi. I quote.

"The earliest Kashmiri work is MAHANAY PRAKASH written by Shati Kanth. Laleshwari composed her philosophy in the language of the people, she expressed her spiritual and mystic experiences in Kashmiri. Her songs became popular and the people committed to their heart and passed on from generation to generation.

To crown all, her message did cut through the man-made barriers of religions. Hindus as well as Muslims became her votaries with equal gusto. Her appeal was humanistic and not sectarian. Her approach was of positive affirmation and not of negative abjuration.

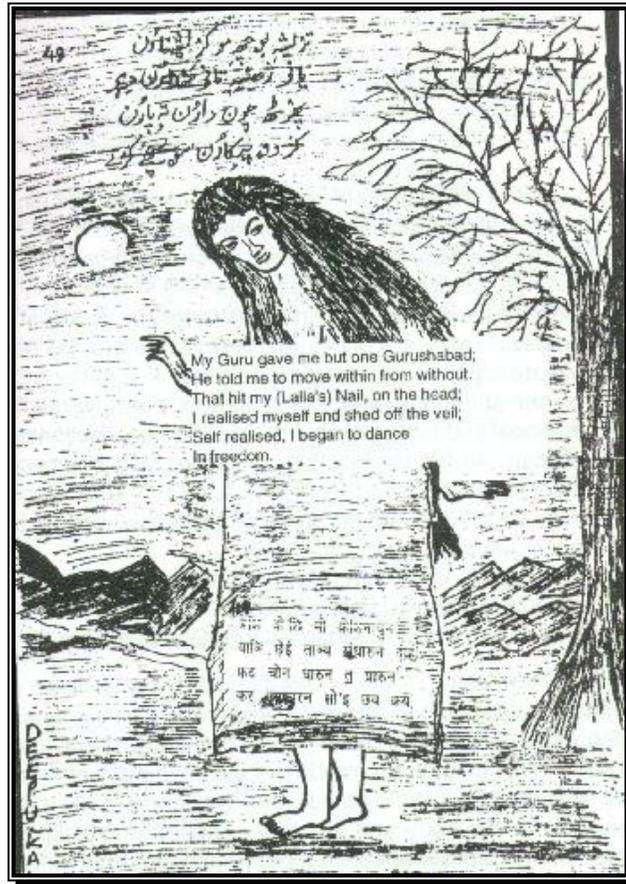
Laleshwari did not preach any religion, she even disdained ritual. She projected a way of life quite in harmony without cultural traditions, in which a happy amalgamation was made of what was good in Buddhism and even Islamic.

Her Clarion call to assimilate human values in those days won for her the esteem and acclaim of Hindus and Muslims alike and the edge of ruthless proselytisation got blunted. It was no mean an achievement on her part in uniting the lost children of one god. Her message was so appealing that the tallest of Muslim Rishis of Kashmir Sheikh Noor-Ud-Din Noorani made her his ideal and expressed what he owed to her in these words :-

"That Lalla of Padmpur was fortunate enough in gulping the ambrosial nectarine draughts; thereby she wjojour adoration as in incarnation of immortal Divinity. Benevolent God, grant me also such a boon."

Source: Gems of Kashmiri Literature and Kashmiriyat

7.7 Lal Ded and her Vakhs



Lal Ded

Lal Ded was born in 1326 A.D.(approx.) 669 years ago daughter of a Kashmiri Brahman named Cheta Bhat near Pampore, Kashmir, based on majority of evidence. She is believed to be a Parmahamsa by her devotees. Studying Her works one is convinced that She is indeed a Parmahamsa.

Rupa Bhawani (1625-1721) regarded her as a supreme guru: Lal man Lal paramagwaram

Parmanand (1791-1879): Unique in her yoga of dwadashanta mandala, Realizing anahata, nada-bindu and Om, Laleshwari attained to the Supreme Ananda.

The books that will be used are:

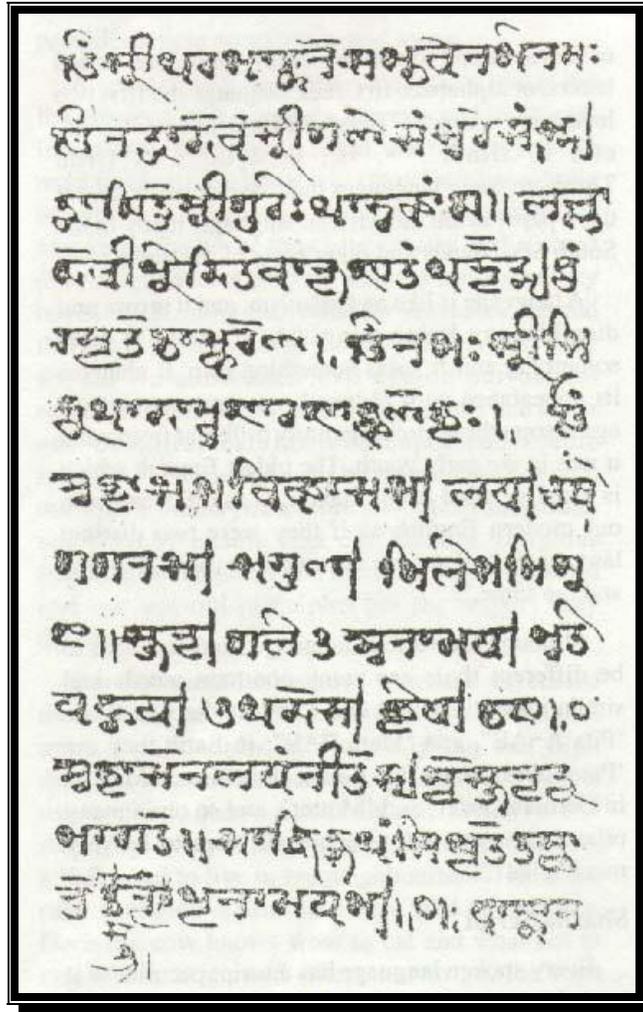
1. JK: Lal Ded by Jayalal Kaul, Sahitya Akademi, Rabindra Bhavan, 35 Ferozeshah Road, New Delhi-1, and as reference,
2. BNP: The Ascent of Self by B. N. Parimoo, Motilal Banarsidass, Bungalow road, Jawahar Nagar, Delhi-7.
3. NKK: Lal Ded Her life and sayings by Nil Kanth Kotru, Utpal publications, Rainawari, Srinagar, ISBN81-85217-02-5. He has the same number of vakhs in the same order as JK. Also, his vakhs are in Devnagri script which is then transliterated in English by us.

The order of the Vakh's are from Jayalal Kaul's (JK) book (1. above) and only one line of the original 'Vakh' is given by JK with the English translation of the entire verse is what is written here. In few cases the translation is from other authors, in which case it will be pointed out. The rest of the Vakh is by either BNP or transliterated from Devnagri script given by NKK.

There are three teams of authors that JK gives which have verses that are concordant with all his 138 verses:

AK: Lalla yogeshwari, Anand Kaul, reprint from the Indian Antiquary, Vols. L, LIX, LX, LXI, LXII.

LV: Lalla-Vakyani, Sir George Grierson and Dr. Lionel D. Barnett Litt. D.(R. A. S. monograph, Vol. XVII, London 1920).



Lalla-Vakh's in Sharda Script (old MS.)

Courtesy: Bhaskar Razdan

WC: Vaakh Lalla Ishwari, Parts I and II (Urdu Edition by A. K. Wanchoo and English by Sarwanand Chaaragi, 1939).

Lal Ded was far above the realm of being a Realized Soul. This is why a title of a Parmahamsa is just a word or a phrase being used to understand where She is coming from.

For the pragmatic thinkers among us please consider this question for it will tell you about Lal Ded.

It is a fact that Lal Ded did not say these Vakhs for the sake of preaching, or taking the position of a teacher or one sermonizing us. She would often speak to Herself and teach Herself as will be clear from the Vakhs. Applying the usual Vedantist reasoning Who is the Speaker of the Vakh and to whom? In many ways She answers this question Herself in Her last Vakh.

138. last vakh of JK (Kaul) 138. of NKK

*yi yi karu'm suy artsun
yi rasini vichoarum thi mantar
yihay lagamo dhahas partsun
suy Parasivun tanthar*

*Whatever work I did became worship of the Lord;
Whatever word I uttered became a mantra;
Whatever this body of mine experienced became
(*yih yath lagyam dehas paritsay)
the sadhana-s of Saiva Tantra
illuminating my path to Parmasiva.*

* refers to the second line in this Vakh (verse) with reference to Lalleswari Vakyani, Rajanaka Bhaskara, 60 verses translated into Sanskrit.

Also, this tells us that people of her stature are born with Self awareness only a little rubbing is needed for them to manifest their Divinity. I believe that They are Put in such a position for the benefit of humanity at large.

Since I do not have as yet these references please try to cross check the Kashmiri with the translation and transliteration. Note the sound A is equal to the stressed sound on a is equal to aa, eg., naavi=nAvi=boat.

7.8 Vakhs

1. of JK 4. or p.206 of BNP

*Ami pana so'dras nAvi ches lamAn
Kati bozi Day myon meyti diyi tAr
Ameyn tAkeyn poniy zan shemAn
Zuv chum bramAn gara gatshaha.*

*With a rope of loose-spun thread am I towing
my boat upon the sea.
Would that God heard my prayer
and brought me safe across!
Like water in cups of unbaked clay
I run to waste.
Would God I were to reach my home!*

Note: She compares Herself with unbaked clay which slowly wastes away all that one has earned, easily mixing with material nature rather than being above it or in control of it. Thus, She pleads with God with pique in heart to take Her across the sea to Her real home.

2. of JK 14. of BNP

La'lith-la'lith vaday boh vAy(bo dAy)
Tseyta muhac peyiy mAy*

***Roziy no pata looh-laengarac tshAy
Niz-swarup kyAh mothuy hAy***

* is by JK

***I will weep and weep for you, O Mind;
(my Soul) The world hath caught you in its spell.
Though you cling to them with the anchor of steel,
Not even the shadow of the things you love Will go with you when you are dead.
Why then have you forgot your own true Self ?***

Many of the Buddhist symbols and ideas will show up in these verses, 'Vakhs'. The idea of Buddhist clinging appears here. Recall that Kashmir was one of the major centers from where Buddhism spread through out Asia.

Reminds me of a story I read on the net some time ago. A Zen master is asked what is the secret of his success. After much persistence by the student, one day the master asks him to get a thick long steel chain and he demonstrates to his student by trying to chain himself to a huge pillar. The student does not understand, the master explains; stop clinging to the world like this demonstration.

Note that the true Self is the Reality only one has forgotten It. By not clinging to the unreal or that which is not permanent does the true Self dawn upon us.

3. of JK

***tala chuy zyus ta pyattha chukh natsaan
vanta mali man khit pachan chuy
soruy sombrit yati chuy machan
vanta mali anna khit rotchan chuy***

***There is a yawning pit underneath you,
and you are dancing overhead.
Pray, Sir, how can you bring yourself to dance ?
See, the riches you are amassing here,
nothing of them will go with you.
Pray, Sir, how can you relish your food and drink ?***

Parmahansa RamaKrishna says that God which has cast a net in the ocean of the world is waiting to draw the net anytime, this is how He Plays this Game of Maya. He says some fishes by nature are so clever that they are never caught in this net. They are the nitya siddhas. Naradh is an example of this. The class which Lal Ded is referring here is the worldly class who hide deeper into worldliness, i.e., in the mud with the net and all. To wake these people up Lal Ded has really addressed this Vakh #3 to them. It is not just enough to understand or be aware of the problem we humans face but also to feel this reality so much that it is difficult to swallow any food or drink. This kind of renunciation can be sensed in the next few versus as well.

4. of JK 4. of NKK and 17. of BNP

***hacivi haa'rinji pyatsuv kaan gom
abahak chaan pyom yath raazdhaana
alanjz bhag bazaras kuluph rous vaan gom
tirith rous paan goam kus maali zaana***

***A wooden bow and rush grass for an arrow:
A carpenter unskilled and a palace to build:
A shop unlocked in a busy bazaar:
A body uncleansed by waters holy-
Oh dear ! who knows what hath befallen me ?***

5. of JK and NKK 16. of BNP

**aayas vate gayas naa vate
suman satha lusum dho
vuchum chandas har no atha
ath nav taras dim kyha bha**

**By the highway I came,
But by the highway I return not.
And so I find me still on the embarkment,
not having gone even half the way,
And the day is done, the light has failed.
I search my pockets but not a cowrie find:
What shall I pay for the ferry fee ?**

Just as in any field of study without putting effort one cannot expect to get results. Vivekananda says it took Him a life time of practice to gain the little he learnt. The problem is to separate the real from the unreal, who we truly are from what we are not, keeping the inner peace and equanimity all the time. The consciousness has as if got mixed with what one is not. Parmahansa RamaKrishna Says keep churning the buttermilk until butter is formed and it floats but does not get mixed with water. After reaching this state does one see that what we are not is also a part of that Self. This can be done either through bhakti, jnana, raja, or karma yoga.

6. of JK 60. of BNP

**Kyaah kara paantsan dahan ta kaahan,
Vakhshun yath leyji yim karith gay;
Saoriy samahan yeythi razi lamahan,
Ada kyaazi raavhe kaahan gaav**

**Ah me! the Five (Bhuta-s), the ten (Indriya-s),
And the Eleventh, their lord the mind,
scraped this pot* and went away.
Had all together pulled on the rope,
Why should the Eleventh have lost the cow ?
(Why should the soul have gone astray?)**

* This me, this ghata (in trika Saiva terminology, the individual person, his living body.)

Lal Ded is showing us how to control the mind. If one feels for the Lord by all the senses (five of them) and by their five activities (total 10) as well towards the Lord, automatically giving the Lord control over the 11th the mind. This should remind you of Arjun and Lord Krishna in the Chariot with five pair of horses. I feel, the same is achieved by chanting where one does not distinguish between the Lord and His Name and also one ignores or weeds out all other unnecessary thoughts (Teachings of Lord Chaitanya Maha Prabhu 500 B.C.) Parmahansa RamaKrishna also says purify your mind and you shall see God/Self as you see me but only more intensely.

7. of JK 7. of NKK and 78. of BNP

**atshyan+ aay ta gatashun gatshe
pakun gatshe then kyho raath
yor aya turiy gatashun gatshe
khenata khenata kheneta kyha**

**For ever we come, for ever we go;
For ever, day and night, we are on the move.
Whence we come, thither we go,
For ever in the round of birth and death,
From nothingness to nothingness.**

***But sure, a mystery here abides,
A Something is there for us to know.
(It cannot all be meaningless).***

+Variation atshan ay (Bhaskara): We have become emaciated with age and have to depart. Nothing endures.

The nothingness in verse 7. is the concept of Shunya of Lord Buddha. Here, Lal Ded tells us that God/Bhagvan/Self exists and all this is not a meaningless journey.

8. of JK 19. of BNP

***aayas kami dishi ta kami vate
Gatsha kami deyshi kava zaana vath;
antidaay lagimay tate,
Chanis phookas kanh ti no sath.***

***Whence I have come and by which way,
I do not know.
Wither I shall go and by which way,
I do not know.
Were I to know the end of it all
And gain the knowledge of the truth,
(it would be well, for otherwise)
Life here is but an empty breath.***

9. of JK 2. of BNP

***gaattulah akh vuchum bwachi suu'ty maraan
Pan zan haraan Pohani vaava laah
Neyshibodh akh vuchum vaazas maaraan
Tana Lalla bha praaraan tseyneym-na praah.***

***I have seen a learned man die of hunger,
A sere leaf drop in winter wind;
I have seen an utter fool beat his cook
(who could not make a toothsome dish).
Since then I, Lalla, anxiously await
The day when the lure of the world will fall away.***

10. of JK 10. of NKK

***da'mi dithu'm nad vahavu'ni
da'mi dyuthum suum na'th tar
da'mi dithu'm thr fuwalwani
da'mi dyuthum gul na'th khaar***

***Now I saw a stream flowing;
Now neither bank nor bridge was seen.
Now I saw a bush in bloom;
Now neither rose nor thorn was seen.***

11. of JK 11. of NKK

***da'mii dhitthu'm ga'j dazu'vu'nii
da'mii dyuthum dh'ha na'th naar
da'mii dhitthu'm Pandavan hu'unz ma'ji
da'mii dhitthu'm kraji mass***

***Now I saw the hearth ablaze,
Now I saw not fire nor smoke.***

*Now I saw the Pandava Mother,
Now she was but a potters' aunt*

12. of JK and NKK 94. of BNP

*tsAmar cha'tu'r rath siihAsan
aahlad nAtiya-ras tuula-paryankh,
KyAh mAnith yeti sthir Aswani?
Kawa zana kAsiy maranann shaenkh*

*A royal fly-whisk, sunshade, chariot and throne, Merry revels,
pleasures of the theater, a bed of cotton down-
Which of these, you think, will go with you when you are dead ?
How then can you dispel the fear of death ?*

13. of JK and NKK 95. of BNP

*kyAh bo'dhukh muha bhava-so'dri dare
Swoth lUrith peyiy tama pankh;
Yama-bhAth karanay kali choradAre,
Kawa zana kAsiy maranann shenkh.*

*Why have you sunk deep in the sea
of the illusory pleasures of the world ?
Why have you pulled down the high-banked road
which could have led you safe across ?
The dense darkness of tamas surrounds you now,
and, at the appointed time,
Yama's apparitors prepare to drag
your body bleeding to death.
Who can dispel your fear of death ?*

14. of JK. 15. of BNP.

haa tsitta kava chuy lo'gmut parmas**
Kava goy apazis pazyuk broent,
Dushibooz vash kooranakh par daramas
Yina gatshana zyena-maranas kroent.*

*Why do you dote upon someone, my Soul,
who is not your true love ?
Why have you taken the false for the true?
Why can't you understand, why can't you know?
It is ignorance that binds you to the false,
To the ever-recurring wheel of birth and death, this coming and going.*

* & ** lit. citta, individual consciousness, the self, drunk with wine offered by another, not produced or brought by oneself. Fig. used for man infatuated with someone other than his wife or his true love; here the unreal, not the true Self.

15. of JK.

*haa manshi kyaazi chukh vuthaan s'ki lavar
O man, why do you twist a rope of sand?
You cannot tow your boat with it.
What God has written "in karma's line" #
Cannot be altered or reversed.*

#'Karma' is the word in the original. God decrees reward or punishment not arbitrarily as one's 'fate', but according to one's karma. Ceremonial rites, pujas and yajnas and the like are 'rope of

sand' and will not avail to change what God has decreed; for man must take the consequence of karma.

However, if one is repentant of ones mistakes and does not repeat them then the prayers (japa) have the power of reducing the effect of karma to a large extent. The role of an umbrella (prayer) in the scorching sun is an example and karma being reduced to a pin prick instead of breaking a leg is another. A Vedantin like Swami Vivekananda would say 'you are It' nothing can touch you so be brave and face your karma by watching the external as one watches a movie.

16. of JK., 16. of NNK (to be filled)

tsarman tsa't.ith ditith pa'ny paanas

What was it you had sown which should have borne a rich harvest?

***You had but tanned a carcass hide,
shaped and stretched it taut on pegs,
(Your only care your own body which you pegged to the bonds of desire).
But counsel to a fool is labour lost,
Like a ball thrown at a big-sized pillar,
rebounding but not hitting the mark;
Or fruitless as feeding a tawny bullock on sweet molasses,
And expect a yield of milk from him.***

17. of JK, 17. of NNK (to be filled)

niyam karyoth garbaa

***In your mother's womb you vowed
not to be born again.****

When will you recall the vow ?

***And die, even while alive
(to all desire, and be released from birth and death)**;
Great honor will be yours in this life and greater honor after death.***

*. A common belief that a child resolves thus in his mother's womb. **. cf., The Gita, V. 23.

18. of JK and 2nd quatrain in 9. of BNP

***muddas gyaanu'c kath no va'ny-ze
Kharas gor dina raaviy doah.
Yus yuth kare su tyuth sware
Krere Karizina panun paan.***

***Impart not esoteric truth to fools,
Nor on molasses feed an ass.
Do not sow seed in sandy beds,
Nor waste your oil on cakes of bran.***

19. of NNK (to be filled)

da'chinis o'bras zaayun zaanahaa

***I might disperse the southern clouds,
I might drain out the sea,
I might cure the incurable sick,
But I cannot convince a fool.#***

#. In this and other vaakhs, Lal Ded is remonstrating with herself, her foolish mind, rather than admonishing others.

Note that once a certain habit has been formed it becomes a part of the involuntary mind to make such a foolish mind to change its bad habit is not easy. The mind loves to travel in the channels it has already created. How can such a mind reflect that his true self is "God Himself"?

20. of JK, 20. of NNK (to be filled)

ttyoth mo'dur tay myuutth zahar

*What is bitter at first is sweet in the end,
What is sweet at first is poison in the end.*
(To everyone is given the choice)
It all depends on the effort put in,
and the unflagging determined will;
For whoever strives must soon arrive at the city of his choice.*

*. cf., The Gita, VIII. 37-38.

21. of JK, 27. of BNP

*gwaran vo'nam kunuy vatsum
Neybra doupanam anndaray atsun;
Suy gav Lali mey vaakh ta vatsun,
Tavay mey hyotum nagay natsun.*

*My Guru gave me but one percept :
"From without withdraw your gaze within And fix it on the Inmost Self."
Taking to heart this one percept,
Naked I began to roam.***

** natsun, pherun, to wander, roam (see supra, p. 12). cf. LV., 94, to dance.

22. of JK, 25. of BNP and NKK

*raajas baa'j ye'my kartal paa'j
Swargas baa'j chiy taph tay daan;
Sahazas baa'j yami gwarakath paaji
Paapa-pwanni baa'j chuy pananuy paan.*

*He who wields the sword a kingdom gains;
Paradise is gained by penance and alms.
Follow the Guru's word and gain
True knowledge of the Self within.
Of his own virtue and his sin
Man himself surely reaps the fruits.*

23. of JK, 24. of BNP

*naaba'dy baaras attagand ddyo'l gom
Diha-kaan hol gom hyaka kiho;
Gwara sundh vanun raavan-tyuol pueom,
Pahali-rost khyuol gom hyaka kiho.*

*The sling of my candy load has gone loose, (and it galls my back);
My body has bent double under its weight*;
how shall I carry the load ?
The word of my Guru (that I must lose the world to gain my soul),
Has been a painful "loss-blister"*** for me.
I am become a shepherdless flock, ah me !*

* LV, 108. Var., My day's work has gone awry. ** The loss has been painful, as a blister.

24. of JK, 26. of BNP

*gwaras pritshom saasi latte
Yas na ke'nh vanaan tas kyaah naav:
Pritshaan pritshaan thachis ta luusas,
Ke'nh nasa nishi kyahtaam draav.*

*A thousand times my Guru I asked:
'How shall the Nameless be defined?'
I asked and asked but all in vain.
The Nameless Unknown, it seems to me,
Is the source of the something# that we see.*

This creation, universe.

25. of JK, 11. of BNP

*zanam praa'vith vyabhav no tsonddum
Luubhan bhuugan baram na pray
Somuy Ahaar suetthaah zonum,
Tsolum dwakha-vaav polum Dai.*

*In life I sought neither wealth nor power,
Nor ran after the pleasures of sense.
Moderate in food and drink, I lived a controlled life,
And loved my God.*

26. of JK, 3. of BNP

*Ayas ti syo'duy gatsha ti syo'duy
Se'dis hol me karem kyaah
Bo'h tas aahsas Agarai veyzay
Veydis ta veyndis kareym kyaah.*

*I came straight,
And straight I shall return.
How can the crooked lead me astray?
Surely, no harm can come to me:
He knows me from the beginning of time,
And loves me.*

27. of JK, 80. of BNP

*khyana khyan karaan kun no vaatak
Na khyan gatshakh ahannkari:
Saomuy khey maali saomuy Asakh
Sami khyana mutsaranay barnyan taari.*

*By pandering to your appetites,
you get nowhere;
By penance and fasting,
you get conceit.
Be moderate in food and drink
and live a moderate life,
The gates of Heaven will surely be
thrown open wide for you.*

28. of JK, 5. of BNP

*ttaalun chu vzmala ta trattay
Ttaalun chu mandinyan gattakaar*

***Tsaalun chu paan-panun kaddun grattay
Heyti maali santuush vaati paanay.***

***Patience to endure lightning and thunder,
Patience to face darkness at noon,
Patience to go through a grinding-mill --
Be patient whatever befalls, doubting not
that He will surely come to you.****

* Var., He will provide for all your wants.

29. of JK, 22. of BNP

***tsala tsitta vandas bayi mo bar
Chon tsinnth karaan paana Anaad,
Tsey kawa zananiya khyod hari kar
Kival tasunnday taaruk naad.***

***Have no fear, O restless mind,
The Eternal One takes thought for you.
He knows how to fulfil your wants.
Then cry to Him alone for help,
His Name will lead you safe across.***

30. of JK, 30. of NKK to be filled

khyath ga'nddith shami naa maanas

***The joys of palate and fine apparel
bring man no lasting peace.
They who give up false hopes and don't
put trust in the things of the world,
Ascend, unafraid of Death's terrors
by scriptures told;
For having lived contented lives,
they are not debtors of Desire.*****

**And do not have to settle accounts with the cruel debt-collector Death.

31. of JK, 31. of NKK to be filled

kandyav karak kandi kande

***O embodied One, dote not upon your body thus, embellishing it, adorning it,
providing luxuries for it.
Even its ashes will not endure.***

32. of JK, 32. of NNK to be filled

swamana gaarun manz yath kande

***Should you, in this body, seek
The Supreme Self that dwells within,
Greed and illusion soon removed,
A halo of glory will surround
this very body of yours.***

33. of JK and NKK, 81. of BNP

***yava tuu'r tsali tim ambar he'taa
bwachi yava tshali tim Ahaar ann;
Tseyta swa-par veytsaaras peytaa,
Tsentan yi dih van-kaavan***

***This counsel to the body give, O Soul*:
Wear only such clothes as ward off cold;
Eat only to satisfy your hunger;
Devote yourself with all your heart
to the knowledge of the Supreme Self.
Consider this body to be food for the forest ravens.***

* LVRB: tsitta dehas vaan kyaa van. cf. Var. LV, 28: tsentan yih van-kaavan, consider this body meat for jungle crows (translation of this line in Vakh above by BNP).

34. of JK, 34. of NNK to be filled

***treshi bwachi mo kreshinaavun
Let not your body suffer
from hunger and thirst,
Feed it whenever it feels famished.
Fie on your fasts and religious rites;
Do good: therein your duty lies.***

35. of NNK to be filled

***atha ma baa traavun khar baa
Do not let loose your donkey** lest
he damage others' saffron fields;
For none will bare his back to suffer
sword cuts and blows for you.#***

** Your mind, # Punishment for the damage done.

36. of JK, 83. of BNP

***ye'my luub manmath mad tsuur morun
Vata-naash maerith ta logun daas;
Tamiy sahaza Ishwar gorun,
Tamiy soruy vyendun saas.
Who slays the highway robbers three,
Greed, Lust and Pride,
And yet, in utter humility, serves
his fellow-men--
He truly seeks out the Lord,
disregarding as worthless ashes
all other things.***

37. of JK, 82. of BNP

***maarukh maarabuuth kaam kruud luub
Nata kaan barith maaranay paan;
Manay kheyn dikh swaveytsaara shamm,
Vishay tihunnd kyaah-kyuth doar zaan.
Slay the murderous demons,
Lust, Anger and Greed;
Or, aiming their arrows at you, they will
surely shoot you dead.
Take care, feed them on self-restraint
and discrimination of the Self;
Thus starved these demons will become
powerless and weak.***

38. of JK and 7. of BNP

*gaal ga'ndiy-nyam bol pa'diy-nyam
Dapineym tiy yas yih routse,
Sahaza-kusamav puuz karineym,
Boh amalloun ta kas kyaah mvotse*

*They may abuse me or jeer at me,
They may say what pleases them,
They may with flowers worship me.
What profits them whatever they do ?
I am indifferent to praise and blame.*

39. of JK and 6. of BNP

*A'saa bol pa'ddiy-nyam saasaa
Mey mani waasaa khiid na heaye;
Boh youd sahaza Shankar-bakts aasaa,
Makris saasaa mal kyaah peyye*

*Let them mock at me and call me names.
If a true devotee of Siva I be,
I shall not feel distressed nor hurt.
Can a few ashes a mirror befoul* ?*

* The ashes serve rather as polish

40. of JK and 10. of BNP

*muudh zaa'niith pa'shith ta ko'r
koul shrutuvun zadd-ruupi aas,
Yus yih dapiy tas tiy boz
Yuhoy tattvavidis chuy abhyaas.*

*Though you are wise, be as a fool;
Though you can see, be as one blind+;
Though you can hear, be as one deaf**;
Patiently bear with all you meet,
and politely talk to everyone.
This practice surely will lead you
to the realisation of the Truth.*

+ lit. one-eyed, ** Var., dumb, but Bhaskar (LVRB) "zo'r ta ko'l", (deaf and dumb): "shrutvaa sarvam shrotrahiinena bhaavyam."

41. of JK

manasu'y maan bhavasaras

*Ocean and the mind of man are both alike:
Under the ocean's bottom lies
the destructive fire, vadvagni#;
And in the breast of man doth rage
the fire of wrath.
When the fire breaks out, its flames
of angry, abusive words,
sear and scorch and burn.
But if one ponders unruffled and calm,
and weighs the words, though angry they be,
They have no substance, no, nor weight.*

Vadvaagni which, according to legend, would destroy the whole world if it were to burst forth from under the ocean.

42. of JK and 23. of BNP

*rut ta krut soruy pazyam
Karnan na bozun, achin na baava,
Oruk dapun yeli vavaondi vuzeym
Ratandip prazaleyem varzani vaava.*

*Ill or well, whatever befalls,
let it come.
My ears will not hear,
My eyes will not see.
When the Voice calls from within
the inmost mind,
The lamp of faith burns steady and bright
even in the wind.*

43. of JK and NKK (to be filled)

mandachi haa'nkal kar tshe'nyam

*When can I break the bonds of shame ?
When I am indifferent to jibes and jeers.
When can I discard the robe of dignity ?
When desires cease to nag my mind.*

44. of JK and 10. of BNP, (to be filled from NKK)

muudh zaa'niith pa'shith ta ko'r

*I have worn out my palate and tongue
reading the holy books,
But I have not learnt the practices
that would please my Lord.
I have worn thin my finger and thumb
telling the rosary beads,
But I have not been able to dispel
duality from my mind.*

45. of JK and 91. of BNP

*avyastaa'ry pothyan chii haa maali paraan
Yitha tota paraan 'Raama' panjaras;
Gita paraan ta hiitha labaan;
Param Gita to paraan cheys.*

*It is easy to read and to recite;
It is hard to practice what one reads,
And, reading seek out the Self within.
By constant practice, not by books,
Conviction grew in my heart
Of God, Who is Consciousness-Bliss.*

47. of JK and 92. of BNP

*Parun polum apuruy po'rum
Kesara vana volum rattith shaal,
Paras prounum ta paanas polum,
Ada gom moluum ta zinin haal.*

*I practiced what I read,
And learnt what was not taught.
From its jungle abode
I brought the lion down
as I a jackal would;
(From pleasures of the world
I pulled my mind away).
I practiced what I preached,
and scored the goal.*

48. of JK and 86. of BNP

*hyath ka'rith raaj pheri-naa
Dith karith trapti na man;
Luub veyna ziv marina,
Ziivanatay mari tay suy chuy jnaan.*

*You will not know peace of mind
if you a kingdom gain,
Nor will you gain content or rest
if you give it away.
Only the man, free from desire,
will never die.
Only he has true knowledge
Who, though alive, is as one dead,
dead to all desire.*

49. of JK and 85. of BNP

*yi yi karu'm kara pyatrum paanas
Arzun barzun beyyis kyut.
Antih laagi-roust pusharun swaatmas,
Ada yuuri gatsha ta tuury chum hyout.*

*I have to suffer the consequence
of whatever I do,
even if I work for others' gain.
But if, with mind from attachment free,
I dedicate all works to God,
It will be well for me wherever I be,
here and hereafter.*

50. of JK and NKK (to be filled)

*kava chukh divaan anine ba'tash
Why do you grope thus like the blind ?
Pray, doubt not what I say to you:
If you are wise, enter within
And see the Lord Himself is there.
You need not search Him here and there.*

51. of JK and 84. of BNP

*pavan puu'rith yus ani vagi
Tas baovi na sparsh na bwachi ta tresh
Ti yas karun anti tagi,
Samsaaras suy zeyyi nech.*

*He who can direct his praana aright,
is not troubled by hunger or thirst.*

*And he who can do this unto the end
is born fortunate* in this world.*

** LVRB. "samsaare saphalam asya jiivitam"
(His life here has been fruitful).*

52. of JK and 30. of BNP

*tsitta twarug gagana bramavon,
Nimishi aki tsandhi yuuzan lach;
Tseitani vagi bavdhi ratith zon
Praan-Apaan sondaarith pakhach.*

*The steed of mind speedeth over the sky,
And, in the twinkling of the eye,
A hundred thousand leagues traverseth he.
Yet a man of discrimination can control
the curvetting steed,
And, on the wheels of praana and apraana, guide
his chariot aright.*

53. of JK and 79. of BNP

*tsyath amarpathi tha'vy-ze,
Ti tra'vith lagi zuure;
Tati tsa no shinkyzi sannda'ri-ze
Dwadashur ti kwach no muure.*

*Keep your mind intent upon
the path that leads to immortality.
Should it stray from the path,
it will fall into evil ways.
Be firm with it and have no fear;
For mind is like a suckling baby,
which tosses restless even in its mother's lap.*

54. of JK, (to be filled from NKK 54.)

*kus mari ta kasuu maaran
Who dies? Who is slain ?
He who forsakes God's Name,
And gets involved in worldly cares.
It's he who dies. It's he who is slain.*

55 of JK

*Gwarashabdas yus yatsh patsh bare
He who has faith in Guru's word,
And with true knowledge for the rein
guides aright the seed of mind,
And holds his senses in control,
'Tis he enjoys the peace of mind.
He will not die, nor be slain.*

56. of JK

*grratta chu pheraan zere zere
Sure and steady the mill will turn
once you propel the wheel.
Mind is the pivot, it should know*

*how best to turn the mill.
And once it turns, it will grind fine,
And grain will find its way to the mill.*

57. of JK, 57 of NKK and page xviii of BNP

*Shiv chuy thali thali rozaan
Mav zaan Hyound ta Mussalmaan
Trukhay chukh ta pananuy paan parzaan
Ada chay Saahibas zanni zaan*

*Siva abides in all that is, everywhere;
Then do not discriminate between
a Hindu or a Mussalman.
If thou art wise, know thyself;
That is true knowledge of the Lord.*

58. of JK

*mithyaa kapatt asath trovum
I renounced fraud, untruth, deceit;
I taught my mind to see the One
in all my fellow-men.
How could I then discriminate
between man and man,
And not accept the food offered to me
by brother man ?*

59. of JK

*muudddo kray chay na dhaarun ta paarun
O fool, right action does not lie
in observing fasts and ceremonial rites.
O fool, right action does not lie
in providing for bodily comfort and ease.*
In contemplation of the Self alone
is right action and right counsel for you.*

* Var., in observing the Five Fires (Pancaagni).

60. of JK

*maa'rith paants buuth tim phalha'ndy
First feed the Five Bhuuta-s+ on the grain
and cates of self-awareness;
Thus fed, offer these fatted rams
as sacrifice unto the Lord.
Then you will know, O restless one,
the abode of the Supreme.
Ceremonial rites and pieties
will cease to be binding on you;
And even the 'left-handed'# practices
will bring no harm to you.*

+ The five bhuuta-s, mahaabhuuta-s, are the five factors constituting the principles of experience of the sensible universe, viz., solidity, liquidity, formativity, aeriality and vacuity.

Reference to Vaamamaarga ritual.

61. of JK and 13 of BNP

*vwath rainyaa artsun sakhar
Athi al-pal vakhur heyth,
Youdvanay zaanakh parma-pad aksher
Hishi Khaosh-khvor keytha-kheyth.*

*Lady, arise and prepare for worship
with wine and flesh and cates.
If you know the changeless Supreme State
(of Parmasiva),
Take and eat them in the company of
fellow Tantric adepts.
(It matters not if, violating custom,
you practice "left-handed" rites. *)*

* The rites of Kaulacaar, a Shaakta cult. The last line is not clear and two variants are given with two different interpretations. The one within brackets is given by Grierson; the other, preceding it, is given by Anand Kaul, and this I think is the better interpretation. The last line (see AK, p.17) being "he' shikhar khe' shikhar hyath". Reference is to Cakrayaag of the Kaula-s. Wine meat and cates were used in worship as symbolic for man's passion, desires and sensual enjoyments; and these too were offered as sacrifice to the Divine Mother.

62. of JK and NKK and 63 of BNP

*gyaanamaarg chay haakavaa'r
Dizeys shama-dama kreeyi panni,
Lama chtrrak posh pranni trakiy vaar
Khey-na-khey-na mwatsi vaaray cheyn*

*The pathway of Jnana is a kaiyard;
Fence it with self-restraint and pious deeds.
Then let the goats of former karma
browse in it and fattened be
as animals fit for sacrifice
at the altar of the Mother.
(Goats of past actions and their fruits
slain in sacrifice,
leaving no karma behind),
The kailyard of karma thus browsed away,
you gain release.*

Many complain about bad thoughts, effects of bad karma, etc. Elaborating Mother Lal Ded's effective solution given above to these problems, one can let the thoughts come and go, you just stand back and laugh at it as it is not a part of you. You are He. Don't act on these thoughts. If a cloud of bad thoughts appear then right action is needed to counter them. Get up and do a pious deed, e.g. the least you can do is starting writing on why these clouds of thoughts are wrong and bad for you, i.e., applying the fire of knowledge and discrimination and continue until you would have overcome this dark cloud of thoughts, other means of nullifying the dark clouds such as getting your frustrations out, e.g., by going for a long walk etc, are also useful. The great Yogi Pathanjali says you need right action to counter wrong action and mere right thoughts wont do you any good to counter wrong action. These counter effects have to take place, each at their proper level of existence: thoughts, words and deeds (action). Swami Vivekananda ji has said watch your thoughts they form your words, watch your words they form your action, watch your action they form your character.

63. of JK and 34 of BNP

*shishiras vuth kus ratte
Kus bavke ratti vaav
Yus pantsh yindray tseylyith tsatte
Suy ratte gatti rav*

*Who can stop the eaves' drip during the frost ?
Who can hold wind in the palm of his hand ?
Who can see the sun in the darkness of night ?
He who holds his senses under control,
Can in the dark catch hold of the sun,
(Can see the Light in the darkness of the soul).*

64. of JK

*shiil ta maan chuy pony kranje
Like water in a colander are name and fame:
they do not last.
Whoever in his fist can hold* a storm,
Or tether an elephant with a hair of his head,
(Whoever controls the storms in his breast,
Or tethers the wild elephant of desire),
'Tis he whose name and fame endure.*

* lit., like a wrestler, a strong man.

65. of JK and 93. of BNP

*laz kaasii shiit nivaarii
Trana zala karaan aahaar;
Yih kami vvopadiish koaruy huutt batta,
Atsiitan vattas satsiithan dyun aahaar.
It covers your shame,
Saves you from cold,
Its food and drink-
Mere water and grass.
Who counselled you, O brahmin,
To slaughter a living sheep
as a sacrifice
Unto a lifeless stone ?*

66. of JK and 55. of BNP

*diiva vattaa divur vattaa
Peythha bvona chuy ikavaathh:
Puuz kas karakh huutt bhattaa,
Kar manas ta pavanas sangaathh.
The idol is but stone,
The temple is but stone,
From top to bottom all is stone.
Whom will you worship, O stubborn* Pandit ?
Let praana and the mind unite
(as an offering to your God).#*

* huutta, adjective, is probably from Sanskrit hatth, akin to Hindhi hatthi and huudd. cf., LV, 17, learned, # Reference to yogic praanaagnihotra.

67. of JK and 56. of BNP

*kush posh tel diiph zal naa gatshe
Sadbhaava gwara kath yus mani heye,
Shambhuhas swari neyth panani yatshe,
Suy dapize sahaza akriyi, na zeyye.*

*He does not need the kusa grass,
nor sesame seed;
Flowers and water He does not need.
He who, in honest faith, accepts
his Guru's word,
On Siva meditates constantly,
He, full of joy, from action freed,
will not be born again.**

* Var., LVRB, 45: say da'py-ze sahazaakriye (His is the true worship of the Lord) is the better reading.

68. of JK and 71. of BNP

*kus push ta kwasa pushaa'nii ?
Kam kusam lagizeys puuze ?
Kami sara goadd dizeys zaldani,
Kava sana mantra Shankara swaatma vuze.*

*Who is the florist, who the flower-girl ?
With what flowers should He be worshipped ?
In what water should He be bathed ?
With what mantra should we awaken Shankara,
Who abides in the Self ?*

69. of JK and 72 of BNP

*man push tay yatsh pushaa'nii
Bhaavaki kusam lagizeys puuze,
Shisharas goadd dizeys zaldaani,
Tshwapi mantra Shankara swaatam-vuze.*

*Mind is the florist, Devotion the flower-girl,
who bring flower-wreaths for Him.
He should be worshipped with the flowers
of faith,
And bathed in the nectar of the Mystic Moon.
Silence is the mantra that awakens Him;
(And, in the deep stillness of the mind,
He wakes up in the inmost Self).*

70. of JK and 57 of BNP

*gagan tsu'y bhuutal tsu'y,
Tsu'y chukh deyn pavan ta raath,
Arg tsanndun, posh poyni tsu'y
Tsu'y chuk soruy ta laagizi kyaah ?*

*Thou art the earth, Thou art the sky,
Thou art the air, the day and the night;
The sacrificial corn Thou,
And unction of the sandal-paste.
Thou art the water, Thou art the flowers,
Thou art all these and everything.
What may I, in worship, bring to Thee ?*

71. of JK and NKK, and 54. of BNP

***dvaadashaanta manddal yas diivas thaji
Naasikaa pavan Anaahatta rav;
Swayam kalpan anti tsaji.
Paanay su Diiva; ta artsun kas ?***

***He who knows the Dvaadashaanta Manddala*
as the abode of God,
And knows the constant Sound# that is borne upon
the praana rising from the heart to the nose,
All vain imaginings flee from his mind,
without effort, naturally;
He knows no God other than the Self,
nor need he worship any other god.***

* 'mandal': orb, disc, sphere, of 'dvaadashaanta' or locality of it; 'dvaadashaantah', a measure of twelve fingers; literally, the end of twelve fingers, here the distance found by measuring. Cf. aadikotih: hrdayam, antakotih: dvaadashaantah; tayoh praanollaasavishhraantyavsare cittaniveshanena parishilanam- PR, pp. 88-89, 135. The praana starts at the point of hrdaya (praanollaasa) and ends (vishhraanti) at dvaadashaanta, i.e., at a distance of twelve fingers from it. Also called anatahdvaadashaanta, i.e., the heart, and baahirdvaadashaanta, twelve fingers' distance from it. See also Svachchanda Tantram (KSTS, 38) p. 65, verse 111; and Vijnana Bhairava (KSTS, 8) verse 49, 51, # Sans. anaahata, the eternal sound, self-created, the mystic syllable OM.

72. of JK and 28. of BNP

***akuy Omkaar yas naabi* dhare
Kumbhay Brahmaannnddas sum gare;
Akh suy manthr tseytas kare,
Tas saas manthr kyaah kare.***

***He in whose navel constantly abides
none other than the One Omkaar,
Who builds a bridge between his own
and Cosmic Consciousness#,
By making mind one with this mighty spell-
What need has he for a thousand other spells ?***

* naabi: navel, cf. "paraavaak mulacakraatha, pashyantii naabhiisamsthita..."

Brahmaanda, lit, Brahma's egg, the universe, used also of brahmarandhra in the crown of the head. Lit., a bridge between the manipura cakra and brahma-randhra, with Omkaar as the mantra; fig., between kumbha(ghatta, the individual) and Brahmaanda, the Cosmic Whole. Var. LV, 34: For whom the kumbhaka exercise formeth a bridge to the Brahma-randhra.

It is said that no mantra is complete without OM in it and the practice of the mantra OM on your own without a Guru is discouraged.

73. of JK and 12. of BNP

***Shiv vaa Keshava vaa Zin vaa
Kamalajanaath naamadhaarin yuh,
Mey abali kaastan bhavaraoz,
Su vaa su vaa su vaa suh.***

***Shiva or Keshva or Jina,*
Or Brahma, the lotus-born Lord,
Whatever name He bear,***

***May He remove from me
the sickness of the world !
It may be He or He or He
(For He is One though called variously).***

* The Buddha. In later Sanskrit literature "Jina" is used for the Buddha.

74. of JK and NKK, and 32. of BNP

***Lal bo luutshu's tshaanddaan ta gaaraan
Hal mey kormas rasanishiti;
Vuchun hyotmas taari diientthmas baran
Meyti kal ganeyam zi zogmas tati.***

***I, Lalla, searched and sought for Him,
And even beyond my strength I strove.
Finding His doors bolted and barred
I longed the more;
And firmly resolved, I stood just there
with longing and love,
Fixing my gaze upon His door.***

75. of JK and NKK

***lolu'ki vwakhli vaa'linj pishim
In the mortar of love I ground my heart,
I parched and burnt and ate it out.
Thus, all my evil passions removed,
I sat serene and unperturbed.
Yet still I doubt if I can know
Whether I shall die or I shall live
(and find release from birth and death).***

76. of JK and 36. of BNP

***sahazas sham ta dam na gatshi
Yatshi no praavakh muktidwaar:
Salilas lavan zan miilith gatshe,
Toti chuy durlabh sahaza veytsaar.
Not by ascetic practices is the Self realized;
Nor by desire* can you gain
the Portals of Release.
In contemplation you may be absorbed
as salt in water,
Yet hard it is for you to gain
the true knowledge of the Self.***

77. of JK and NKK

***zanu'ni zaayaay ru'ty tay ku'tiy
Plump and comely were they born,
Causing their mother's womb great pain;
Yet to the womb they come again.
Siva indeed is hard to reach;
Pray, heed the doctrine this teaches you.****

* that is, take a lesson from this and reflect upon it.

78. of JK and NKK

ywasay shiil piitthas ta pattas

**Itself a part of the rocky earth,
It is the self-same stone that makes
A pavement, seat or pedestal,
Or a mill-stone for a grinding mill.
Siva indeed is hard to reach;
Then heed the doctrine this teaches you.**

The obvious doctrine this teaches us is that our true self is the spirit, which is all pervading like the stone in earth which has assumed various forms, shapes and sizes.

79. of JK and NKK

rav mata thali thali taa'pytan

**Will the sun not shine on all alike
But give heat only to holy lands ?
Will Varuna* not visit all homes alike
But visit only the homes of the good ?
Siva indeed is hard to reach;
Then heed the doctrine this teaches you.**

*The god of water.

80. of JK and 29. of BNP

**zaanahaa' naaddi-dal mana ra'ttith
Tsattith vattith kuttith kaliish;
Zaanaha ada astah rasaayan gattith,
Shivachuy kruutth ta tsen vopadiish.**

**If I knew how to control my naaddi-s,*
How to sever them from the pull of desire,
How to bind them to the inner Self,
How to cut the bonds of sorrow,
I should have known how to compound
the Elixir of Life.
Siva indeed is hard to reach;
Then heed the doctrine this teaches you.**

* The tubes through which the vital airs circulate of which the principal ones are ten, cf. dashi naadi vaav, the vital airs of ten naaddi-s, Infra No. 91.

81. of JK and NKK

yihay maaira-ruup pay diye

**As mother a woman suckles a baby,
As wife she dallies amorously in love,
As maayaa she takes one's life in the end-
And yet in all these forms a woman she.
Siva indeed is hard to reach;
Then heed the doctrine this teaches you.**

82. of JK and NKK

Shiv chury zaa'vyul zaal vaahraa'vith

**Like a tenuous web Siva spreads Himself,
Penetrating all frames of all things.
If while alive, you cannot see Him,**

**How can you see Him after death ?
Think deep and sift the true Self from the self.**

83. of JK and 48. of BNP

**tuu'r salil kho'tt taa'y tuu're
Heymi Trey gay byon-abyon veymarsha;
Tsetani rav bhaati sab same,
Shivamay tsraatsar zag pashya.**

**When water freezes in the cold,
it turns to snow and ice.*
Reflect, O man, that one becomes
three different things#;
And when the sun of pure Consciousness shines,
The world of living and lifeless things,
the universe and whatever exists,
are, in the Supreme, seen as one.**

*SSV, p.98, lines 4-5, jala himan ca yo veda, #byan: maayaa (multiplicity); byanaabyan: vidyaa (unity in multiplicity): abyan: Shakti (unity). Or, respectively, idam idam, aham idam, aham.

84. of JK and 61 of BNP

**ase pwande zwase zaame
Neythay snaan kari tiirthan;
Vahari vaharas no'nuy aase,
Nishi chuy ta parzaantan.**

**Laughing sneezing, coughing, yawning,
Bathing in sacred pools,
Going about unclothed throughout the year*, He is about you all the time-
In all these forms recognize Him.**

VAR. LVRB nonuy aase: He is to be seen in all these activities all the year round. He is close to you as yourself, "pashyaatmadevam nijideha eva." Also see KSTS 8, sloka 118. "kshutaadyante bhaye shoke ... brahmasattamayii dashaa, taam tatra tatra avasare vimarshya..."

85. of JK and 45. of BNP

**baan go'l tay prakash aav zuune
Tsaendr go'l tay mo'tuy tseyth;
Tseyth go'l tay keynhti na kune;
Gay Bhoor Bhwaah Swaah veysarzith keyth.**

**The sun sets, the moon begins to shine*;
The moon sets the mind alone is left;
The mind dissolved, nothing remains;
Earth, atmosphere and sky# depart,
(And in the Supreme are absorbed).**

* Praanaa the sun moving upwards, apaana the moon moving downwards. Cf., "praanaatmaa ravih uurdhva-mukhatvena caran; taalvaadi-aatmani antare sthitah; candrah apaanaatma adhomukhatvena..."- Tantraaloka (KSTS 36), Vol. IV, pp. 26-28, # Bhuh, Bhuvah, Svah.

86. of JK and 37. of BNP

**mal vwandi zolum
jigar morum
Teli Lal naav draam
Yeli dali travimas tati.**

*I burnt the foulness of my soul,
I slew my heart, its passions all,
I spread my garment's hem, and sat
just there, on bended knees,
in utter surrender unto Him.
My fame as Lalla spread afar.*

87. of JK

*latan hund maaz laaryom vatan
The soles of my feet wore off on the roads
while I wandered in search of Him.
Then lo ! on a sudden, I saw
That He was all and everywhere,
I had nowhere to go in search of Him.
This was the Truth of a hundred truths.
Whoever learn of it, will they not wonder ?
Will they not be mad for joy ?*

88. of JK and 35. of BNP

*po't zuuni vo'thith mo't bolanovum
Dag Lalanaovam Dayisannzi prahe;
Lali Lali karaan lal vuzunovum,
Miilith tas shrotsyom dahe.
In the last watch of the moonlit night,
remonstrating with my wayward mind,
I soothed my pain with the love of God.
Gently, gently, accosting myself,
"O Lalla, Lalla, Lalla",
I woke my Love, my Lord and Master,
In whom absorbed, my mind was cleansed
of its defilement by the Ten.**

* The ten indriya-s, dahe, five organs of sense and five organs of action. Var., dihe: Even my body was purified.

89. of JK and 41. of BNP

*tanthu'r gali tay manthu'r mwatse
Manthr go'l tay mwo'tuy tseyth,
Tseyth go'l tay kehhti na kune,
Shuunyas Shuunyaah miilith gav.
Let go the sacred tantra rites*,
Only the mantra sound remains.
And when the mantra sound departs,
Only the citta is left behind.
Then lo ! the citta itself is gone,
And there is nothing left behind;
The void merges in the Void
(the silent citta in Pure Consciousness.)#*

* cf., LV 11, texts, holy books, # LVRB 11, drashtaa shishyate citsvaruupam: For "shunya goes to shunya", see chapter 5, supra, p.82; shunya is not emptiness.

90. of JK and 43. of BNP

*luub maarun sa haz vyatsaarun
Dro'g zaanun kalpan traav;
Nishi chuy tay duur mo gaarun;
Shuunyas Shuunyaah miilith gav.*

*Realization is rare indeed:
Seek not afar, it is near, by you.
First slay Desire, then still the mind,
giving up vain imaginings;
Then meditate on the Self within,
And lo ! the void merges in the Void.
(The citta merges in the Cit.)*

91. of JK and 42. of BNP

*tsitta-twarug vagi hyath ro'ttum
Tseylith milavith dashinaaddi vaav,
Tavay Sheyshikal veyglith vatsham;
Shuunyas Shuunyaah miilith gav.*

*I reined in the steed of the mind,
And, by constant practice, brought together
the praana-s coursing the ten naaddi-s.
Then the nectar of the Mystic Moon
flowed down, suffusing my whole being,
And the void merged in the Void,
(The stilled mind merged in Pure Consciousness).*

92. of JK

sa'ts-sas na saatas pa'ts-sas na rumas

*On nothing else I built my hopes,
In nothing else I put my trust-
My vaakh* brought me the wine I drank,
My vaakh gave me the strength to seize
The darkness that within me lurked.
I rolled it up and knocked it down,
And tore it to pieces (dissipating
the darkness of my soul)*

* Verse-sayings of Lalla.

93. of JK and NKK, and 38. of BNP

*she' van tsa'ttith shashikal vuzu'm
Prakrat hu'zum pavana saeti;
Lolaki naara vaolinj buzam,
Shankar lobum tamiy saeti.*

Cutting my way through Six Forests,
I came upon the Digit of the Moon+.
By means of the practice of praanaapaana#,
The world of matter shrank for me.
Then roasting my heart in the fire of love,
I found my God.*

* LV: Cakra-s. LVRB: "kaamaadikam kaanena shattkam etat", i.e., kaama, krodha lobha, moha, mad and ahankaara, + Sahasraara (top of the head), #lit., pavan (vital airs); but see LV: "by controlling my vital airs..."

94. of JK and 53. of BNP

*Omkaar ye'li layi o'num
Vuhay ko'rum panun paan;
Shu-vt travith sath-marg ro'tum,
Teyli Lal bo'h va'tsas Prakaashasthan.*

When I became one with the Supreme Word,
My body blazed as red-hot coal+,
Then I gave up the Path of the Six#,
and betook myself to the straight true Path^,
Which led me to the Abode of Light.*

* Aum, +Such blazing is an actual experience. It does not mean burning out impurity or selfhood, # "SSaddadhva" six paths according to AAnavopaaya of Trika Darshana, viz varna, mantra, pada, kalaa tatva and bhuvana, ^She has now taken to the Shaambhavopaaya, the straight easy path which requires no rigorous saadhana. PR, pp. 20 & 83 (sukhopaayameva), for Var., see LV. 82.

95. of JK and 67. of BNP

*he gwaraa parameshwaraa
Baavtam tseyyi chuy antar vyo'd;
Dwashavay vo'padaan kanda-puraa
Huh kava turun ta haah kava to't ?*

*O Guru, you are as a god to me,
Tell me, you know the secret truth.
Both Praana-s rise from 'Kandapura',
the "place of the Bulb", the navel region,
Why is haah hot, why is huh cold ?*

96. of JK and NKK, and 68. of BNP

*naabisthaana chay prakrath zalavu'nii
Brahmasthaanas shishirun mwakh,
Brahmaandas chay nad vahavani,
Tavay turun 'huh', 'haah' gav to't.*

*At the navel region is the Place of the Sun,
Where Prakriti glows as hot as fire;
From here hot breath rises to the throat.
At the crown of the head is the Place of the Moon,
From here cool nectar down the naaddi-s flows,
Thus haah is hot, and huh is cold.*

97. of JK

Lal bo draayas lolare

*For love that would not let me be,
I, Lalla, set forth in search of Him.
And toiled and toiled for days and nights.
Then lo ! the most auspicious moment of life-
I saw the Pandit in my own home.*

98. of JK and 33 & p. 204 2nd Vakh in BNP

dama dama ko'rmas daman aaye
Prazalyom daph ta naneyam zaath;
Andrium Prakaash neybar tsho'ttum,
Gatti ro'tum ta karmas thaph.*

*Gently, gently, I trained my mind
to suspend its processes and thoughts.#
Then (in the windless calm), the flame of the Lamp,
shining steady and bright,
Revealed my true nature unto me.
In the dark recesses of my soul+
I seized upon Him and held Him fast.
Then I diffused the inner light,
(and within, without, all was Light).*

* & # Var., LV. 4:"slowly, slowly, did I stop my breath in the bellows-pipe (of the throat)"
damaadam ko'rmas daman-haale, + Gatti,"in the darkness itself." Better reading LVRB:
svasmindehe (in my ownself)

99. of JK and NKK, and 46. of BNP

*tshaanddaan luutshu's paa'ny paanas
Tsheypith Jnaanas votum na kuuntsh (kaanh);
Lay karmas ta vatsas alsthaanas,
Bari bari baana ta cheyvaan na kuunh (kaanh).

Searching the Self, I wearied myself;
For none by searching ever gained
The secret knowledge beyond the mind.
I stopped searching, and love led me
to the Tavern* door.
There I found wine jars aplenty,
But none desiring to drink from them.*

* 'al-thaan', the abode of amrita (nectar), of the Supreme, which is also in the Self of man
though he wearies himself searching Him everywhere else.

100. of JK and 51. of BNP

*makuris zan mal tso'lum manas
Ada mey labam zanas zaan,
Suh yeli dyuuenthum nishi paanas
Soruy suy ta bo'h no kea'h

Foulness from my mind was cleared
as ashes from a mirror,
Then recognition of Him came to me
unmistakable and clear.
And when I saw Him close by me,
He was all and I was not,
(and there was nothing else).*

101. of JK and NKK, and 96. of BNP

karu'm zu' kaaran tre' ko'mbith
Yava labakh paraluukas annkh
Vo'th khas Surya-manndal tso'mbith,
Tavay tsaliy maranun sheynkh.

Do away with karma-s two# and causes three+,
and you will be honored in the world to come.
Arise, ascend and cut through the Sun's orb^,
and you will overcome the fear of death.*

* Var., LV, 75:"by practising kumbhaka yoga.", # Good and bad, + The three mala-s, impurities,
that bring, viz., aanavamala, of finitude; maayiyimala, of multiplicity; kaarmamala, of resultant

pleasure, and pain from karma, ^Surya-maddala, through which the soul has to pass on its way to the Supreme; the Kundalini has to cut its way from Muulaadhaara through Manipua, the seat of Agni, to Sahasraara, the seat of the Moon, the abode of Siva.

102. of JK and 97. of BNP

*gyaanu'ky ambar puu'rith tane
Yim pad Lali dapi tim hreydi annkh;
Kaarana Prnavaki layi ko'r Lalle
Tseyth-jyoti kaosan maranun sheynkh*

*In the robe of Jnaana clad,
On the tablet of her heart engraved
the words that Lalla spoke,
And by means of the mystic syllable OM,
Lalla merged in her 'Cit-Jyoti',
The luminous light of pure Consciousness;
And thus dispelled the fear of death.*

103. of JK and 100. of BNP

*shuun-yuk maa'daan ko'ddum paanas,
Mey, Lalli, ruuzam na bwad na hosh;
Veyzay sapanis paanay paanas,
Ada kami hili+ phoal Lalli pamposh !*

*I traversed the vastness of the Void alone,
leaving behind me reason and sense,
Then came upon* the secret of the Self;
And, all on a sudden, unexpectedly,
In mud+ the lotus bloomed for me.*

* lit.. I became a confidante of my Self, + Kashmiri hyal, dirty ground, covered with litter, mud, dirt used as manure. Or, variant, hil, an aquatic weed abundantly growing in Dal Lake. Figurative: What was valueless (my body or myself) became precious and a thing of beauty and joy.

104. of JK and NKK

samsaaras aayas tapasii

*A tapasvin into the world came I,
And Bodha illumined my path to the Self.*
Alike for me is life and death:
Happy to jive and happy to die,
I mourn for none, none mourns for me.+*

* Var., LV, 35. Also LVRB, 34. "praaptaa vishuddham sahajam prabodham", where sahaja as an adjective qualifies prabodham, + lit., I die for none, none dies for me. Cf., Utpala's Siva Strotavali, xiii. 3: ... tishtatah satatam arcitah prabhum jivitam mrataam athaanyath astu me".

105. of JK and NKK

Lal bo draayas kapsi poshici sa'tsu'y (LV, 102 & 103)

*Hoping to bloom like a cotton flower,
I, Lalla, set forth in the colourful world.
But soon the cleaner and the carder came
and gave me hard knocks and blows.
Spun into a gossamar yarn
by a woman spinner on her spinning wheel,*

*I was helplessly hung upon a loom,
and given more knocks from the weaver's broom.*

*Now turned into cloth, I was dashed and dashed
by the washerman on the washing-stone.
Then into a large mortar made of stone,
he threw me, and with his grimy feet,
rubbed me with fuller's earth and soap.
The tailor now worked his scissors on me,
and cut me with care, piece by piece.
Thus was it that I, Lalla, at last
entered the High Estate of God.*

106. of JK and NKK

raaza-hams aa'sith sapudukh ko'luy

*Thou wert a royal swan once,
now turned mute*.
Someone, it seems, has run off with
something of thine.
When the mill-stone stopped, the grain channel
was choked with grain,
And away ran the miller with the grain.*

Note a royal swan is also a symbol of a paramahansa: God in human form having all human qualities and God awareness, * at seeing something that has struck Lalla dumb. Lalla has seen, but she cannot describe what she has seen. Has she had a glimpse of vishvarupaa, the Cosmic Form, its indescribable splendour and awe, so that she, who was vocal till now, cannot speak? That something has taken away her powers of speech (SLK, p. 65). cf., LV, 8

107. of JK and 62. of BNP

*prathu'y tiirthan gatshaan sa'ny-yaa'sy,
Gwaaraan Swadarshan myul;
Tseyta parith mo nishpath aas,
Denshakh duure dramun nyuul.*

*The pilgrim sannyasin goes from shrine to shrine,
Seeking to meet Him who abides within himself.
Knowing the truth, O soul, be not misled;
It is distance that makes the turf look green,*

108. of JK and 76. of BNP

*kandyav geh te'zy kandyav vanvaas,
Veyphoal, man na rattith ta vaas;
Deyn-raath gaenzarith panun shwaas,
Yuthuy chukh ta tyuthuy aas*

*Some leave their home, some the hermitage,
But the restless mind knows no rest.
Then watch your breath, day and night,
And stay where you are.*

109. of JK and 77. of BNP

*kalan Kaalazaa'ly yo'dvay tse go'l,
Veyndiv geyh vaa veyndiv vanvaas;
Zanith sarvagath Prabhu amol;
Yuthuy zaanakh tyuthuy aas.*

*Should you destroy vain imaginings, desires,
which form the very web of time;
Should you realize the Lord, all-pervading
and yet untouched and pure,
You may live the life of a householder,
Or a hermit's life in a hermitage,
living the truth that you have known.*

110. of JK and 75. of BNP

*Shiv Shiv karaan hamsa-gath so'rith
Ruuzith veywahari deyn kyoha raath
Laagi-rost yus man karith
Tasi netyh prasan Suura-Guruunaath.*

*Constantly invoking the name of Siva,
Meditating on the Way of the Swan*,
From attachment and duality set free -
Such a one, even if busily engaged
in the affairs of the world, both day and night,
Wins the favour of the God of gods.*

* Mystic name for "Soham" (I am He) which reversed, becomes "Hamsa" (Swan), sometimes used to denote Paramasiva.

111. of JK and 87. of BNP

*kenh chiy ne'ndriha'tiy vudiy,
Keantsan vudeyn neysar peyyiy,
Kenh chiy snasn karith aputi,
Kenh geyh bazith ti akryiy,*

*Some though asleep are yet awake;
Some though awake are yet asleep;
Despite ablutions some are unclean;
Despite householders' active life,
Some, by their actions, are untouched.*

112. of JK and 88-A. of BNP

*zal thamuno hutva turnavano
Uurda gamano par-varzeyt carit
kaattha deni dwad shramanaavano
Anti sakalo kapatth careyth.*

*To stop a running stream, to cool a raging fire,
To roam the skies on sandalled feet,
To milk a wooden cow -
All this is fraud and jugglery.*

113. of JK and 59. of BNP

yath saras sarpho'l na ve'tsiy,
Tath sari sakalay poani ceyn;
Mrag, sragaal, gannddi, zalhasti,
Zeyn naa zeyn ta toutuy peyn.*

To the lake too small even for a mustard seed,
All living beings come to quench their thirst;
And into it, as soon as born,
keep falling, falling,*

***Deer, jackal, rhinoceros, sea-elephants
and all.***

* Of earthly existence, as against the Eternal.

114. of JK and 58. of BNP

***tre'yi ne'ngi saraah sa'ry-saras,
Aki neyngi saras arshas ja'ay;
Harmukha kaunsara* akh sum saras,
Sati neyngi saras Shunyaahkaar.***

***Three times the lake overflowed its shore;
Once its waters and the sky did meet
From Haramukh to Kaunsar* in one vast sheet.
Seven times I saw the lake vanishing in the void.
I remember having seen, in former lives,
through aeons of time,
These dissolutions of the worlds and their rebirth.***

* From Haramukh mountain in the north to Kausarnag in the south.

115. of JK and NKK

***mad pyuvum syanda-zalan yaitu
However many parts I played upon the stage,
However often I quaffed that wine,
the water of the Syand*,
However many lumps of human flesh I ate,
Yet I am the same Lalla still.
What profiteth it all to me ?***

* A tributary of the Jhelum in Kashmir. Note that eating the human flesh is a part of sixty-four main Tantric Sadhana. The idea is to get rid of vritti's (habbits of the mind) such as attachments to ones body, etc. I have no practical experience with such eating but see Sri Ramakrishna the great master by Swami Saradananda, translated by Swami Jagadananda. Sri Ramakrishna Math, Mayapore, Madras.

116. of JK and NKK

***a'sii aa'sy ta a'sii aasav
In time past, we were;
In time future, we shall be;
Throughout the ages, we have been.
For ever the sun rises and sets;
For ever Siva creates, dissolves,
and creates again.***

117. of JK and 49. of BNP

***dyan tshe'zi ta razan aase,
Bhuutal gaganas kun vikaase,
Tsaendar Rahu-grras maavase;
Shiva puuzun gav cita-aatmase.
When the light of the day is quenched
in the darkness of the night,
The earth extends to meet and dissolve
in the ethereal sky,
And (on amaavasya*) all is blank and dark eclipse.***

***But (strange!) Raahu, the Demon of eclipse,
is swallowed by the New-born Moon.
The illumination of Cit-Atman
is the true worship of Siva, the Supreme.***

* On the amaavasya of solar eclipse, Raahu is supposed, by popular tradition, to swallow the sun. But, says Lalla, that the seeker who treads the path has the experience of the manifested universe, the sun and the sky and all the worlds, vanishing and becoming one with the unmanifested all-pervading Akshara. There, for the moment, it seems to be "dark, irretrievably dark" in the great Void; but soon it is lit up by the New-born Moon, the Paraa-Samvit, which is the illumination of the Higher Consciousness revealing the abode of the Supreme Siva.

118. of JK and 52. of BNP

***tsidaanandas gyaanaprakaashas,
Yimav tsyuun tim zivantay-mukt;
Veyshmas samsaaranis paashas,
Abodhy gaenddaah sheyth-sheyth dith.***

***They who have known the Supreme Self,
Cidaananda Jnaanaprakaasha,
(compact of the Bliss of Pure Consciousness
and Light of Knowledge Absolute) -
They are the Jivan-mukta-s (who,
while alive, have found release
from ever-recurring birth and death).
The ignorant add knot to knot, in hundreds,
to the tangled web of samsaara,
its recurrent birth,
its recurrent death.***

119. of JK and 69. of BNP

***kus dingi ta kus zaagi ?
Kus sar vatri teliy ?
Kus Haras puuzi laagi ?
Kus Paramapad meliy ?***

***Who dozes off ? Who is alert ?
What lake constantly oozeth away ?
What should be offered in worship to God ?
What supreme station should one gain ?***

120. of JK and 70. of BNP

***man dingi ta akul* zaagi,
Daddiy Sar pancayaendi vatri teliy,
Svaveytsara poani Haras puuzi laagi,
Paramapad tsiitnaa Shiva meliy.***

***It is the mind that dozeth off:
It is the Akula* Transcendent that is ever alert.
The mighty senses are the lake
constantly oozing out,
constantly filled again.
The constant awareness of the Self
is worship befitting the Lord,
And Sivahood the supreme station
man should gain.***

* Paramasiva beyond the Kula, the thirty-six Tattva-s, the universe.

121. of JK and 65. of BNP

**Shiva gur tay Keshav palanas
Brahma paayreyn vavaseys
Yuugi yuuga kali parzaaneys
Kus Diiva ashwavaar peythth ceyddeys ?**

**Siva is the horse,
Vishnu holds the saddle,
And Brahma the stirrups.
It is the yogi who,
in the light of his yoga, knows
Which god can mount the horse ?**

122. of JK and 66. of BNP

**anaahata kha-swaruup shuunyaalay
Yas naav na varan na guthr na ruup
Aham vimarsha Naada-Binduy yas voan,
Suy Diiva ashwavaar peythth ceyddeys (khotus).**

**He who is the eternal 'Anaahata',
The ever-unobstructed sound of OM;
Whose is the all-permeating form
of the etherial sky;
Whose dwelling* is the vast transcendent Void;
Who has no name, caste, gotra, nor form;
Who is Pure, Undifferentiated Self-awareness;
Who is "Nada-Bindu", the Logos and the Light+ -
He is the God Who mounts the horse.**

* Or, perhaps better, who is the abode (ground, home) of, + The Sound and the Dot, mystically represented by the semicircle and the bindu (dot) of the anunasika of the Syllable OM as it is written. By an extension of meaning, nada-bindu or, in the Agama-s, more precisely, Nada-Vindu (Nada representing Shakti and Vindu, Siva) represents the ultimate Supreme, Paramasiva.

123. of JK and NKK

**kunyar-ay bozakh kuni no rozakh
Would you understand what Oneness* is ?
It has turned me into nothingness.
Though He is One, Alone, and All,
Yet I am caught in the War of Two+.
Though He has neither colour nor form,
Yet I am caught in His wondrous forms#.**

* Unity of Existence, + Duality, # Multiplicity.

124. of JK and NKK

**rangas manz chuy byo'n byo'n labun
He is in myriad colours and forms*,
Seek Him out.
Patiently suffer whatever your lot,
And happy be.
Anger and hate and enmity,
You must destroy.**

**All this done, though hard it be,
Behold thy God+.**

lit., rangas manz, on the stage of the world where the play is going on, 6. lit., Siva

125. of JK and 98. of BNP

**dishi aayas dash dish tiilith,
Tsalith tsottum shuunya ada vaav,
Shivay dyuu'tthum shaayi-shaayi miilith
Sheyh-ta-treyh traopimas ta Shivay draav.**

**I roamed the ten directions and
pierced the wind and the void.
I closed the nine gates of the body and
shut out the Thirty-six *.
Wherever I looked, I found the Lord,
Within, without, and in the Void+.**

* The 36 tattva-s (literally, thatnesses) the categories or principles from Paramasiva to the earth, according to the Trika Saiva cosmology, + Within the mind, in the world outside, and in the Impersonal Transcendent.

126. of JK and NKK

**tana mana gayas bo tas kunuy
I turned to Him heart and soul,
And heard the ringing of the Bell of Truth.
There, in dhaarana, fixed in thought,
I soared the Sky and the Region of Light*.**

* lit.. had the experience of Aakashaand Prakaasha. Lalla heard the ever-unobstructed (anahata) sound of OM (The Bell of Truth); and, in her deep concentration. became absorbed in the Impersonal Transcendent (the Sky, the Void). But she went beyond, ascending to the abode of Paramasiva who, according to Trika Darshana, is both Prakaasha and Vimarsha, Light and Self-Awareness.

127. of JK and 64. of BNP

**a'ndariy aayas tsa'ndru'y gaaraan,
Gaaraan aayas hiheyn hih;
Tsay hay Naaraan, tsay hay Naaraan,
Tsay hay Naaraan, yim kam vih ?
I searched within for the Mystic Moon,
For like seeks out the like.
Thou art all this and this and this;
There is none else but Thee.
What then is the meaning of Thy sport,
Of Thy creation's wondrous forms ?**

128. of JK and 21. of BNP

**yimay she' tse' timay she' me',
Shyaamagala tse' byoan taotthis,
Yuohay beynabhid tse' ta me'
Tsa sheyn* svaami boah sheyyi+ mashis.
O Lord of the Dark Blue Throat,
I have the very same Six Thou hast.
And yet, estranged from Thee,**

*I suffer misery.
There surely is this difference:
Thou art the master of the Six*,
By the Six+ I have been robbed.*

* Sovereign power, omnipotence, omniscience, All-inclusiveness, eternity, All-pervasiveness (that is, in Trika: maayaa shakti, sarvakar-tritva, sarvajnatva, puurnatva, nityatva, and vyaapakatva respectively), + The six kancuka-s, coverings of limitation, viz., maya, kala, vidya, raga, kal, niyati.

129. of JK and 20. of BNP

*Naatha ! na pan na par zonum,
Sadai buudum yi kwa dih;
Or (Sadai budum yiko dih);
Tsa boah, boah tsa myul naa zonum,
Tsa kus boah kwasa chum saendiih.*

*Lord, I did not know who I was,
nor Thou, the Supreme Lord of all.
I knew only this body of mine always*.
The relation between Thou and me,
That Thou art I and I am Thou
and both are one, I did not know.
(But now I know),
To ask: 'who art Thou, who am I ?'
is doubt of doubts.*

* sadaa'y bodum yikuy deha (LVRB, 7) but cf.,... yi kwadeha, LV, 7: "Continually have I mortified this vile body."

130. of JK and 44. of BNP

*Lal bo tsaayas swaman baagabaras,
Vuchum Shivas Shakht miilith ta vaah !
Tati lay karmas amritsaras,
Zinday maras ta me' kari kyaah.*

*I, Lalla, entered by the garden-gate
of mine own mind,
And there (O joy!) saw Siva with Shakti
sealed in one;
And there itself I merged in the Lake
of Immortal Bliss.
Now while alive I am unchained
from the wheel of birth and death,
What can the world do unto me?*

131. of JK and NKK

*tsu'y diva gartas ta dharthii srazakh
Thou dost pervade all shapes and forms,
Though breathest life into all frames,
The whole creation hums with Thy silent sound*.
Who can measure the Immeasurable, O Lord!*

* *The Anaahata naad, the AUM.*

132. of JK and 74. of BNP

*par ta paan ye'my so'muy mon,
Ye'my hyuuh mon deyn kyoha raath,
Ye'mysay adway man saopun,
Tamiy dyuu'thuy Sura-Gurunaath.*

*He who regards himself and others alike,
He who regards alike both day and night,
He whose mind is free from duality -
He alone hath seen the God of gods.*

133. of JK and Vakh 1. p. 204 BNP

*abhyaa'sy savikaa'sy layi vo'thoo,
Gaganas svagun myuul samitsratta,
Shunya gol Anaamay motuu,
Yuhoy vopadiish chuy bhatta.*

*By oft-repeated practice, the wide expanse
of manifested universe is lifted to absorption;
And the saguna world, of forms and qualities,
merges in the vastness of the Void
with a splash of water on water falling;
Then the ethereal Void dissolves,
and the Ineffable Supreme alone remains.
This, O Bhatta*, is the Truth to gain.*

* The Kashmiri Pandit (Brahmin) is often so called.

134. of JK and 40. of BNP

*Vaakh, maanas, kwal, akwal naa ate,
Tshwapi, Mudri ati na praviish;
Rozaan Shiv-Shakt na ate,
Mvatiyay kuanh ta suy vopadish.*

*Here there is neither word nor thought,
Transcendent nor non-Transcendent here.
Vows of silence and mystic mudra-s
cannot gain you admittance here.
Even Siva and Shakti (Tattva-s) remain not here.
The Somewhat that remains is the Truth
to know and realise.*

135. of JK and p. 200 Vakh b. of BNP

*tsu' naa bo naa dhey naa dhyaan,
Gay paanay Sarvakrya mashith:
Anyav dyuu'thukh keyenhti na anvay:
Gayi sath layi Par pashith.*

*Here there is neither thou and I,
No "postured thought", nothing to contemplate,
Even the All-Creator is forgot.
The ignorant blind* cannot see
the Ineffable Supreme hard to know.
But the pure, the wise, having seen+
merge in the Supreme.*

* Var., LVRB, 59: "anya dyuthukh ..." (They) saw Other than all these, the Absolute, the Relationless (Ananvaya) "kentsh na anvay".

+ sat: the whole objective universe. Var., LVRB: The good become absorbed in Him. See LV, where sath is said to mean 'the Seven Worlds'.

136. of JK and 50. of BNP

*paanas laa'gith ruudukh me' tsu',
Me' tse' tshaaendaan luustum doah;
Paanas maenz ye'ly dyuu'thukh me' tsu'
Me' tsu' ta paanas dyutum tshoah.*

*Thou wert absorbed in Thine Own Self,
hidden from me;
I passed whole days in seeking Thee out.
But when I saw Thee in mine own Self,
O joy! then Thou and I
disported ourselves in ecstasy*.*

* cf., LV, 44: "The second meaning" given there is what the words cannot bear, however much their meaning may be strained.

137. of JK and 101. of BNP

*tsyath no'vuy tsa'ndrama no'vuy,
Zalmay dyuu'thum navam no'vuy
Yana peyttha Lalli me' tan-man no'vuy,
Tana Lal boah navam navay cheys!*

*The citta, the mind, is ever new,
The ever-changing moon is new,
And ever new the shoreless expanse
of waters* that I have seen.
Since I, Lalla, have scoured my body and mind,
(emptied it of dead yesterdays
and tomorrows unborn),
I live in the ever-present Now,
(and all things always are to me)
for ever new and new.*

* zalamay, Sans. jalamaya, Grierson (LV. 93) explains it as a "waste of waters" at the time of pralaya, destruction of the Universe.

Therefore, "the universe itself". It may rather be the shoreless ocean of existence or of Reality. Whatever the exact meaning, Lal Ded speaks of her complete transformation and 'renewal'.

Interestingly, the same New Mind here when it is in its deluded form is also referred to as water of a lake which constantly oozes out, see JK Vakh 120. By constant tapasya the same mind is transformed so as to be able to see this new shoreless expanse of waters, Parmahansa Ramakrishna says one sees the Reflection of Him in a Pure Mind.

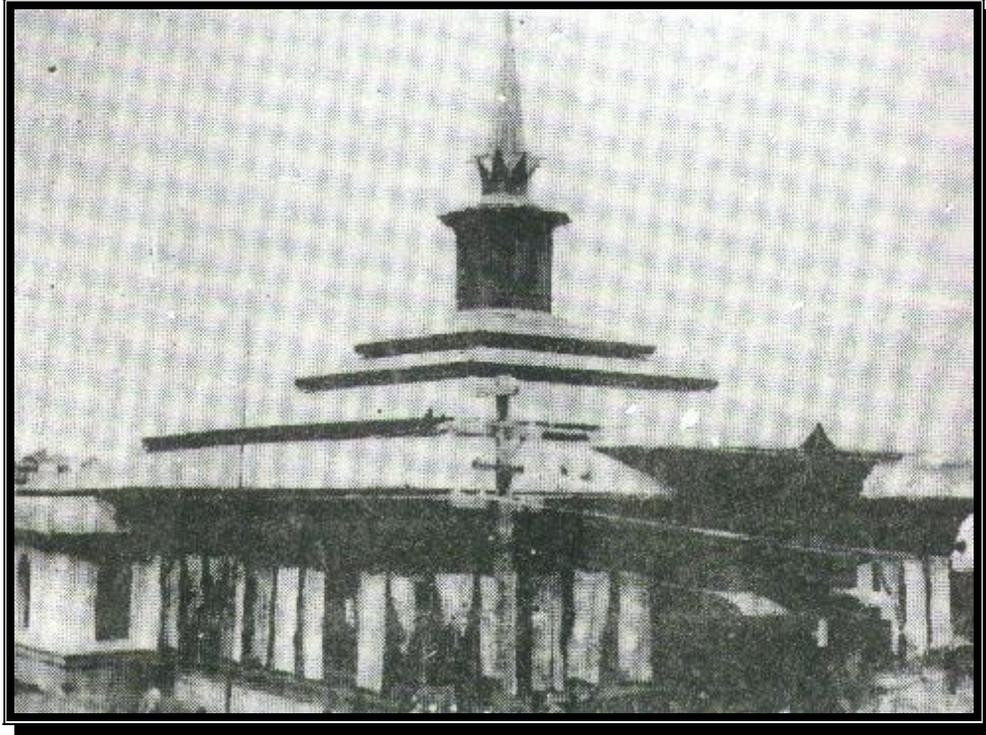
138. of JK and NKK

*yi yi karu'm ko'rum suy artsun
yi rasini vichoarum thi mantar
yihay lagamo dhahas partsun
suy Parasivun tanthar*

*Whatever work I did became worship of the Lord;
Whatever word I uttered became a mantra*;
Whatever this body of mine experienced became+
the saadhana-s of Saiva Tantra
illumining my path to Paramasiva*

* cf. SSV, III, 25-36: sharirvrttirvratam (26), kathaa japah (27). (For such a one the normal daily routine of his becomes a vrata, that is, religious vows, etc (26), and whatever he says becomes the recitation of a mantra), + LVRB, 58. "yih yath lagyam dehas paritsay". For Var., LV, 58. See KT, IX. 23, "...yatra yatra mano yaati tatra tatra samaadhayah (wherever the mind goes there is a samaadhi for it).

8.0 NUND RESHI



Ziyarat-i-Chrar-e-Sharief (Supply of photograph by courtesy of Sh. Moti Lal Saqi)

The Nund Reshi's Ziyarat at Charri-Sharief, Budgam District Kashmir, is his self-choiced place of final repose for eternal rest after his soul left his body to reside and flew in space, to find his place of honour like Lal Ded as models of global humanism.

True to the core, they are practical messengers for equality of the human race along with life in the biosphere.

Hence the Ziyarat has duly become one of the most frequented place of pilgrimage in Kashmir for all sections of people irrespective of caste, creed or religion.

8.1 Poetry of Shaik-ul-Aalam

Moti Lal Saqi

In the realm of Kashmiri Literature Shaik-ul-Aalam is second to Lal Ded only. His poetry is considered sacred by the common people. Mussalmans of the valley have great respect for his *Shruks*. His *Shruks* and other longer poems are quoted from the pulpit in the religious sermons enjoyed and adored by the literate and illiterate equally, irrespective of their faith or religion. A number of his verses are quoted in day-to-day conversation by the common people and such verses have attained the status of proverbs, wise sayings and parables.

Shaik-ul-Aalam's poetry is the spontaneous expression of his spiritual experiences and observations. He, in fact, has poured his very soul in his verses. His poetry reveals the grandeur of the saint as a great soul and poet of high order. There is no contradiction between the patron saint and poet Shaikh. When we examine his poetry in detail and depth, it is impossible to understand the saint and his Rishi order unless and until his poetry is understood. He made his

poetry the message of his faith, love and brotherhood, peace and respect for all creeds and beliefs, but his message has not injured or diminished the quality and grace of his Shruks and longer narratives. Here we come across a perfect blend between his gospel and poetry. Such complete blend is hardly witnessed, which speaks of his poetic genius and complete grip on the art of versification. Like a master mind he has converted his feelings, experiences and observations in living images and word pictures.

His poetry is the harbinger of a new mystic order the neo-Rishi order of Kashmir which has hardly any parallel. This mystic order has absorbed all the good and noble principles of different prevailing faiths. As regards his 'Rishi Order' there is no recorded evidence or source other than his poetry available to understand its basic principles or tenets.

Junior contemporary of Lal Ded, Shaik-ul-Aalam was in many ways very close to her. His sources of inspiration remained almost the same which nourished the ideal world of Lal Ded. He too preached non-violence, and adopted the way of asceticism. There is much more resemblance evident in their poetry; difference if any is in thought content, presentation and execution of the theme. But form is the same. The poetry of Lal Ded and Shaik-ul-Aalam is complimentary to each other.

The poetry of Lal Ded is termed as Vakh and that of Shaik-ul-Aalam as 'Shruks' in Kashmiri. The Vakh owes its origin to Sanskrit 'Vakhya' and the Shruk, is, in fact the Prakrit form of Sanskrit 'Sholok'. In Sanskrit both these words have nothing particular to denote as independent forms of poetry. In Kashmiri both the words refer to particular genres used for rendering the mystic experiences in poetry.

Like Vakh most of the Shruks are four line stanzas and their rhyme scheme is as follows :

Though independent of foreign influence Vakhs and Shruks have of-course something in common with Hindi Doha and Chau-Paei and Rubai. How and why our ancestors classed and divided the poetry of these two epoch making personalities as 'Vakh' and 'Shruk' is still a problem to be resolved

The poetry of Lal Ded and Shaikh represent the phases of Kashmiri language when it was thriving in the lap of Sanskrit culture. It belongs to that bright period of our language when Kashmiri could easily bear the burden of philosophy and communicate its essence to the readers. It was not the beginning of a glorious chapter of Kashmiri language and literature, but the end.

After Shaikh and his contemporary Avtar Bhat there is a complete break for a long period. It is worthwhile to say that while Shaikh-ul-Aalam's *Shruks* represents the language of the common man, Avtar Bhat's verses represent the language of the elite of that period. There are references in books at some literature was produced in the intervening period also but nothing has come down to us. Actually this period of Kashmiri History was a period of chaos and civil unrest. Every now and then kings were installed and deposed. Later on when Habba-Khatoon (16th Century A.D.) appears on the scene we see a complete, rather drastic change in the form as well as thought content of Kashmiri poetry.

In Persian Rishi Namas it is recorded that one of the disciples of the Shaikh, Kati Pandita compiled his poetry in the form of a book but this manuscript is not traceable. Historians have written that court poet of Budshah - Milla Ahmed translated the poetry of Shaik-ul-Aalam in Persian but this version too is not available now. It was the result of reverence of the people for Lal Ded and Shaik-ul-Aalam and established sacred oral tone of their poetry that some people had committed it to memory and this tradition continued for centuries together. Finally the 'Vakhs' of Lal Ded were written down with their Sanskrit commentary in late 18th Century. The Shruks of Shaik-ul-Aalam were collected and written down in 19th century by Baba Kamal-Ud-

Din, Mir Abdullah and Baba Khalid in their respective Rishi Namas; Rishi Nama of Baba Nasib-Ud-Din Gazi was written only 190 years after the death of the saint and contains only a few *Shruks*.

Baba Davood Muskavati's 'Asrar-ul-Abrar' provides the reader with some details about the wanderings of the Shaikh. So far as his poetry is concerned Muskavati has provided nothing to satisfy our craving.

The compilers of Rishi Namas have rendered a great service to Kashmiri language and literature by recording the *Shruks* of the Shaikh for the posterity. Otherwise Shaikhs' poetry must have been wiped out for ever, but at the same time they have left out a sizeable portion of Shaik's poetry which they refer to as Shamskriti (poetry in Sanskrit) and 'Gouri' (poetry in the idiom of Pandits) because all such poetry was beyond their comprehension. As such the poetry of Shaikh is invaluable linguistically also. The study of his '*Shruks*' proves beyond any doubt that Sanskrit was a dominating force in the 14th Century A.D. in Kashmir. It enjoyed the royal patronage of some Mussalman kings also and was replaced by Persian in 15th century during the kingship of Budshah (1420-1470). The word hoard of *Shruks* owes much to Sanskrit. Most of the spiritual and technical terms, besides some, 'Tatsam' and 'Tad Bhav' words have been borrowed from Sanskrit besides, a host of words and technical terms in their Prakrit form. He has enriched his poetry with epic and Puranic allusions and mythology. We frequently see words and terms 'Giana Dhyana', 'Krodha', 'Bal', 'Bhag', 'Lobha', 'Siva', 'Chitta', 'Kivala', 'Panthan', 'Punya', 'Diva', 'Bandhana' etc. used in their original meaning in his poetry. We rarely come across a Persian word or phrase in his real *Shruks* which is enough to prove that during his life Persian had yet to make a mark on the life and culture of Kashmir.

Thus we come to the conclusion that Shaik-ul-Aalam's poetry thrived in such a background which was illuminated by Sanskrit culture and thought. It is close to the Sanskrit Kavya tradition and has a direct link with Sanskrit. His 'Shamskriti' and 'Gouri' poems would certainly open new vistas of understanding and would unfold many hidden realities about 15th century Kashmiri but all the poems of this class are lost for ever.

Shaik-ul-Aalam is the father of narrative (Nazam) in Kashmiri. He enriched the Vatsun also, which we for the first time come across in the poetry of Lal Ded. Some of the longer poems of the Shaikh are more revealing than his *Shruks*. It is he who paved the way for the forthcoming mystic poets and provided them with the fund of words and technical terms which served them as chariots for the revelation of their mystic experiences. From Souch Kral (19th century A.D.) to Ab. Ahad Zargar (died 1984) all our Sufi poets have derived inspiration from him and have been influenced by him. He has recorded almost all the details of migration of his great grandfather and his settlement in Kashmir. He has openly recorded that he is a Mussalman as his father embraced Islam at the hands of Syed Hussain Simnani at Kulgam.

He craves for that what was attained by Lal Ded and cries :-

"That Lalla of Padmanpora drank ambrosia in gulps. ' She saw Shiva all around her, in each and every object, oh God bestow me with such eminence."

His poetry has a cooling and soothing effect, with something deep, something peculiar to communicate. It has a glow of spirituality around it and a keen reader gets lost and is absorbed in it. One feels refreshed after reading or listening to it. Every time its recitation has something new and novel to convey. The spontaneity of the Shaik's poetry is like that of a mountain stream which has a powerful gush-and makes its way through the stone beds and hard rocks. The saint has used the languages in such a creative way that every word and phrase bears a fresh look, attains new dimensions of grace and meaning. His poetry is not confined to the mystic experiences alone. Sometimes he comes out of his mystic world also and talks of life. His longer

poems are the word picture of the society of the age and unveil the inequality, injustice, tyranny and social disorder in such a way that a sensitive person can hardly control his tears.

In one of his longer poems 'God has nothing to do with all this' he reveals :

***"There are people who have hoarded enormous quantity of food grains.
Food grains of various tastes and colours.
There are people who long for a morsel of food.
Their infants wail and weep of hunger.
This state of affairs is man made and man created. God has nothing to do with all this."***

Commenting on the cruel behaviour of men Shaikul-Aalam says :

***"They will cut the throat of that very cock.
Who calls them to prayers.
They will simply weigh him for their own ends. I beseech I may not be born among such people Oh! God."***

At the same time we witness the all pervading dread of death in his poetry :

***"One can not escape death and its blows.
Noble souls are being swept away every now and then."***

Shaik-ul-Aalam always stressed the unity of man. Man in his eyes was the symbol of the divine. To serve the mankind is the noblest service and way to God :

***"Why are you bent upon to create hatred amongst them.
They are the descendants of one and the same mother,
serve to the best of your capacity Mussalmans and Hindus.
If you follow this path God will bestow his grace on thee."***

Throughout his pious life Shaik-ul-Aalam fought against the bigots and bigotry; because in his opinion bigotry was the very negation of truth, and was against the fundamental dictums of every religion. Bigots have nothing to do with the real nature of religion because all the religions teach tolerance and respect for other's creeds. Bigots simply create an atmosphere of hatred and

disagreement and thus pave the way for their ends. They pretend to be learned but their attitude exposes them at every step. They learn only to attain worldly fame and have no liking for attaining the divine. Addressing the bigots the Shaikh says :

***"You have crammed the books only for worldly ends.
Your learning never prevents you from your bad deeds.
You always think in terms of trapping each-other
Your contention is wrong, for you consider.
Yourselves to be amongst the chosen.
I foretell with authority that you will not reach the goal."***

In the poetry of Shaik-ul-Aalam there is no dearth such *Shruks* which contain the essence of Vedanta. In one of the Shlokas of 'Bhagvat Gita' Lord Krishna says :

***"It is desire, it is anger
Born of Rajujana
All consuming and most evil.
Know this to be the enemy on earth" (Gita A-3 S-37)***

Shaik-ul-Aalam says :

***"Desire, pride and greed overwhelmed you.
It is the burning inferno before your very eyes."***

At another place he says :

*"If you are under the fury of God.
Do not try to avoid it.
If he puts you to a hard and fast test.
Consider it to be the source of comfort.
If you do this you are sure to be a chosen one."*

In Gita Lord says :

*"Satisfied with whatever comes unshaked,
beyond the pairs of opposites.
Free from envy, balanced in success and failure.
Acting he is not bound" (Gita A-2 S.12).*

Shaik-ul-Aalam reveals the nature of ultimate thus :

*"It was there from the very beginning.
It will always remain there.
Meditate upon the ultimate.
All your doubts will fade away.
My inner self, beware."*

The dictum of Gita runs thus

*"Never the spirit was born,
The spirit shall cease never,
Never was time it was not.
End, beginning are dreams."*

Shaik-ul-Aalam says :

*"Who saw him face to face,
Who follow his path,
Those who concentrate and meditate upon the ultimate.
They alone find an easy path to him."*

Addressing Arjuna, the Lord says :

*"Oh! Arjuna, He who acts me,
depends upon me.
Devoted to me,
gives up attachment,
is without hatred towards any being,
reaches me."*

Great personalities are mirrors and in a mirror everybody is bound to see his reflection. Shaik-ul-Aalam one of the noblest of Kashmiris is one, in the fraternity of great Indian sages and saints like Tulsi Dass, Tuka Ram, Sur Mass, Mira Bai, Guru Nanak, Nama Deva, Bhagvat Kabir and others. Shaik-ul-Aalam commands a place of respect and reverence as a great saint and a great poet. In fact Shaik-ul-Aalam is one of the foremost makers of our language and literature.

Source: Vitasta

8.2 Nunda Rishi - "Subdue the five senses to attain the supreme Siva"

J. N. Ganhar

Sheikh Nur-ud-Din, endearingly and in veneration called Nunda Rishi, has left an indelible mark on the thinking and culture of all Kashmiris. The great sage was one of the twin

stars of medieval Kashmir along with Laleshwari (Lal Ded) with whom he shared the intensity of mystic experience whose profundity remains unrivalled to this day.

Sheikh-Nur-ud-Din lived from 1378 to 1438 AD. His 600th anniversary celebrations understandably led to a welcome revival of interest in all that he said and stood for. Much useful light has already been shed on some hitherto little known facts of his life and work. But, in the absence of any contemporary records about him, there remain certain important questions to which correct answers must be found to enable a balanced appraisal of his marvellous achievement which has left such a deep impress on the people of Kashmir and their behaviour and thinking. It is proposed to refer to some of these here in the hope that scholars and researchers, who have made this branch of investigation their chosen field, may address themselves to the task of finding answers to them.

8.2.1 Crucial Period

Nunda Riyosh lived in one of the most crucial periods of Kashmir's long and chequered history. But beyond a solitary line in a chronicle of his time, we have no contemporary record about his life or wade. Certain details in this behalf have come down to us in various Rishinamas or Nurnamas. But these, as Amin Kamil, an eminent poet and critic, points out, greatly differ from one another. In the profusion of miracles and magical deeds ascribed to him, some important details about his life and work have dropped out. And in the words of the eminent poet and literary historian, the late Abdul Ahad Azad, "greater reliance has been placed in them on imagination than on historical facts. "His verses and Verse-sayings, known as Shruks in Sanskrit and what they regarded as Pandits' language, have been completely left out by authors of Rishinamas and Nurnamas, because they were beyond their comprehension.

8.2.2 Mixing of Facts

The first Rishinama or Nurnama that has come down to us was written about 200 years after his passing away. Inevitably, there has been a lot of mixing of facts and fresh light needs to be shed on many "unclear" events and episodes in the story of his life and the cobwebs that have gathered around many others need to be cleared.

Take, for instance, his name itself. His is the rare example of a person who is known by a number of names - Nunda Riyosh or Nund Rishi, Sheikh Nur-ud-Din and Sahazanand. The great Sheikh's spiritual eminence and moral rectitude have also justly won him the designation of Sheikh-ul-Alam from his compatriots, and even his one-time opponents ultimately felt constrained to acknowledge him as "The Light of the Faith" or Nur-ud-Din. But was he named as such, i.e. as Nur-ud-Din, at his birth, or did he come to be so known only after Mir Mohammad Hamadani, son of the great Mir Syed Ali Mamadani, recognised him as such?

In this connection it might at once be pointed out that the contemporary chronicler, Jonaraja, refers to him as Mala Nurdin, "the chiefest guru of Muslims". But the saint-poet always refers to himself only as Nanda. And this is the name by which he has most commonly been known till today. Could it be that Nurdin was an appellation conferred upon him later by virtue of his spiritual eminence?

Nund Rishi's parents were named Salar Sanz and Sadra Maji. While there is some difference of opinion about his father's name, Sadra is clearly derived from Samhdra Ha two sons, prior, to her marriage with Salar Sanz, bore the non-Muslim names of Shush and aandur. Was Sahazanand also born before her marriage. The Sheikh's wife 'Zai Ded' also bore a clearly Hindu name. She too might have been a Hindu originally.

8.2.3 Closest Disciples

Of the sage's four closest disciples two appear to have borne Hindu names originally, Baba Bam-ud-Din (Bhuma Saad or Sahi) and Baba Zain-ud- Din (Ziya Singh or Jaya Singh). Similarly, of the rishis mentioned by him before his time, two at least, Zankar and Palasman, might well be the illustrious Janaka and Palastaya.

There has been a galaxy of Muslim saints and sages and some great ones among them commanded the respect and allegiance of vast numbers of Hindus also. But they have not been known by Hindu names among their non-Muslim followers. Sheikh Nur-ud-Din alone enjoyed this rare distinction.

According to the known facts of his life, the sage started life normally; he married and had two issues. But what he saw going on around him made him intensely sad, and he lost interest in life as normally lived. So he took to caves and solitary places for severe penance and meditation. According to Dr. Sufi, "he felt disgusted with the ways of the world, and deciding upon renunciation, retired to caves for meditation at the age of thirty", and "lived for twelve years in wilderness." In his last days, Dr. Sufi adds, the saint sustained life on a cup of milk a day. Finally, he goes on to add, the sage "reduced himself to water alone."

8.2.4 Renunciation

Dr. Sufi quotes Baba Daud Khaki for the statement: "In addition to leading a retired life, he was one of those who continually fasted". Like the pious among the Hindus, "he had given up eating flesh, onions, milk and honey for many years," i.e., he had given up all animal food besides onions, as has been the wont with the Hindu saints and sages. Elsewhere, the eminent historian remarks in passing that "Islam does not countenance the enervating type of Tasawwuf which Iqbal too condemned in the first edition of *Asrar-i-Khudi*..."

Of Yasman Rishi, at whose hands Nund Rishi's parents are stated to have been converted to Islam, Dr. Sufi has this to say: "He travelled far and wide. Later, he lived mostly in forests. His daily food was a cup of wild goat's milk...." Significantly, no one is mentioned in connection with the initiation of Sheikh Nur-ud-Din.

Kashmir witnessed the worst type of religious persecution in the time of Sultan Sikandar (1389-1413 A.D.) and his successor, Ali. Under the influence of outsiders and at the instigation of his minister, Suha Bhat, who had renounced the ancestral faith, the king, according to Jonaraja, "took delight, day and night, in breaking the sacred images" and temples. The Sheikh lived during this period when the very identity, the Kashmirian-ness of Kashmir, if one may use that expression, was at stake and in danger of being destroyed. Imbued as he was with the glorious traditions of his motherland, Sheikh Nur-ud-Din could not but be very unhappy about it.

8.2.5 One God

God is one, all religions are in their ultimate essence one. What is needed is a life of piety and purity, no matter what faith one follows. The prolonged course of penance and meditation, upon which he embarked, had convinced him, apart from his spiritual attainments, of the truth of this fundamental basis of a good life and this also provided a solution to the riddle of his time. He seems to have realised that Kashmiris' precious heritage, so dear to him, which was sought to be destroyed by outsiders, could be saved only by a happy "marriage" of the best in the old and the new, in the union of the Hindus and the Muslims into a common brotherhood, in their co-existence and cooperation and not in confrontation. That is why he again calls upon the people, especially those who came from outside and the zealots among the new converts, to live together in unison, so that God Himself would rejoice. He called upon them to subdue the five

senses, and get over the evils of Kama, Krodha, Lobha, Moha and Ahankara to achieve the highest to make union with Shiva (as he puts it) reminding them that mere lowering of the fleshy body would not save them. He calls upon the people not to go to priests and Mullahs, not to shut themselves up in places of worship or forests but "to enter thine own body with breath controlled, in communion with God".

Again and again he stresses the need for unity among Hindus and Muslims; God Himself would rejoice, he adds, if this happy consummation came about. It was for views such as these that Sheikh- ul-Alam came to be designated Alamdar or standard-bearer of Kashmir.

But enlightened views such as the foregoing could not endear him to the outsiders most of whom were interested in getting hegemony over this beautiful land and possession of the Kashmiri grandees' estates and properties. We know it from the contemporary historian, Janaraja, that Mala Nurdin, as he calls him, was imprisoned and put under restraint during Ali Shah's time. And Amin Kamil tells us how the Rishinamas reveal that outsiders were opposed to him and harassed him in many ways. But little daunted, he pursued his enlightened course, as though to justify his title to being called Alamdar of Kashmir and all that it had stood for at its best.

8.2.6 Eminence

The Sheikh's spiritual eminence and his humanistic philosophy made him the idol of the people of Kashmir. They flocked to him and some of them modelled their very lives on his pattern. These latter who came to be known as Rishis, after him, were of great help and assistance to him in the stupendous task that he had undertaken.

Rishis were by no means new to Kashmir. Rishis and Munis had been known among the Hindus from hoaly antiquity. Kalhana mentions some well-known Rishis like Vishwamitra, Vasishta and Agastya in his Rajatarangini. He describes a Rishi as "a treasure of asceticism". The term Rishi should by no means have been uncommon in our saint's time also. In fact, he describes the person at whose hands his parents received the Islamic faith as a Rishi.

8.2.7 Self-Abnegation

But the Rishis of those days, though they commanded the respect of their fellow-beings and outsiders for their simplicity, spirit of service and self-abnegation, were not rated high in the matter of knowledge of the Islamic faith. Jehangir, for example, says in his Memoirs: 'Though they have no religious knowledge of learning or any sort, yet they possess simplicity and are without pretence...'

In organising the new Order, Nund Rishi had before him the example of the Buddhist Sangha, which for centuries before the advent of Islam had been such a prominent feature of the religious and socio-cultural landscape of the Valley. And like Buddhist monks, the Rishis also did not marry; nor did they eat flesh. Like them again, they would not revile those not of their faith, and lived simple, frugal lives and tried to be a source of benefit to the community at large. For this reason, the "Brotherhood of Rishis" may well be considered to be a descendant of the Buddhist Sangha or a Buddhist Order of Monks.

In this connection, a most interesting fact that has come to light is recorded in Baba Khalil's Rishinama. In this work the author has ascribed a 2,500 verse Sanskrit work, Buddha Charita, to Nund Rishi. According to Baba Khalil, the work was composed by him on his re-emergence from a 12-year sojourn in a cave at Kaimoh on the ninth of Chaitra, a very sacred day in the Hindu calendar, both in Kashmir and the rest of India.

8.2.8 Wrong Assessment

Since Baba Khalil was not conversant with Sanskrit, he has not been able to correctly assess the nature of the work or what it actually was. In truth it must have been the well-known Buddhist work, Buddha Charita, which the Kashmiri savant kept with himself in his seclusion. And when, after he had found answers to the riddles and questions that had made him resort to severe penance and meditation in a cave, he re-emerged into the work-a-day world, the great work on the Buddha's life and philosophy was with him. In this connection it is interesting to note that another great work, Yoga-Vasishtha, was the solace of Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin (Bud Shah), the noblest ruler that Kashmir has ever known, in the closing embittered years of his life.

Source: Koshur Samachar

8.3 Nund Reshi - (1377-1442 A.D.) Bio-Data and Background Information

P. N. Razdan (Mahanori)

Nund Reshi was the founder and most popular saint of the Reshi cult of Kashmir. Whereas Hindu scholars call him Sahazanand because of his Hindu ancestry, but of late Muslim theologians describe him as Noor-ud-Din Noorani or Sheikh-ul-Alam (the light of religion and the Sheikh of the world). But as the darling of all Kashmiris, irrespective of caste and creed, and as per his own repeated reference, as Nunda he was endearingly called Nund Reshi. His pious memory still continues to be cherished by this nomenclature.

His ancestry according to records, is traced to the Thakur Rajputs of Ujain where from they are said to have migrated to the Kishtwar township of Jammu and settled there. Later, after their banishment from Kishtwar, his parents, Salar Sonz and Sadara (later called Sadar Moaj) crossed into the Kashmir Valley and finally settled in a village of Kulgam Tehsil called Khehygam Jagipora. Nund Reshi was born in this village but brought up in another village of the same tehsil, called Mynoh Katymukh.

Sahaz Quasum of June 1991 records his original name as Nanda, according to what it says was the saint's own statement. One of his shruks, quoted elsewhere in this book, confirms this fact. His father Salar Sonz, took up the job of a night watchman. On his usual rounds of the village, one night he is said to have overheard a conversation between a childless Hindu saintly couple:

"Swami Ji, we are getting old and we have no child, I wonder what'll happen to us when we become weaker and weaker with the growing age.

God is with us, dear, why do you worry prematurely?

What'll become of us when we are too weak to earn our livelihood. What if, we fall ill.?

"Never mind, God is merciful, almighty and all providing, if one of us dies, who'll look after the other, think about our precarious condition, Swami Ji ? Pray, do something."

"My darling, I have had a strange dream last night, it revealed that early before dawn tomorrow, two exquisite bouquets of flowers will bloom out of the nearby spring, one after the other, it is a good augury"

What then, Swami Ji ? How can it be a good augury for us ? interrupted his wife.

"Any woman who sees, smells and picks the first bunch of flowers before the other bunch grows up, will give birth to a son who will turn out to be a great saint. Any woman who spots, smells and carries away the other bunch will get another son who will also become a saint."

Hearing this conversation, Salar Sonz cut short his nightly rounds and rushed back home. He apprised his wife Sadra Moaj of the Sadhu's dream, forecasting the birth of two saints. Salar Sonz accompanied Sadra Moaj immediately to the Spring. They remained awake there till the appearance of first bunch of flowers.

No sooner did the beautiful flowers shoot up above the surface of the spring water than Sadra Moaj waded in sniffed it and carried it home.

Later when the Sadhu's wife went there, she got only the second bunch, both gave birth to a son each in due course. The former grew to become the peoples darling saint, known by different names, Sahazanand Noor-Ud--Din Noorani, Sheikh-ul-Alam and popularly as Nund Reshi.

The latter became Buma Reshi of Bumzoo village, a kilometre away from Mattan township in Anantnag tehsil

8.3.1 Post Birth Divine Feed

All attempts by parents of Nunda and the neighbours to feed the infant were resisted by the new-born. The struggle continued for three days. The parents felt dejected and dismayed.

Then, all of a sudden, Lalleshwari (Lal Ded) happened to enter the room she took the infant in her lap, kissed him, put him on to her own teets and whispered the following into his ear:

***If thou were not ashamed of
Being born,
Why are thee
Ashamed of feeding at
Thy mother's breasts ?***

The baby is stated to have responded immediately and behaved as a normal baby.

Evidently, he seems to have preferred to wait for a spiritual feed prior to physical nourishment as preordained. Nothing but spirituality was practiced by him all through his life. As expected Nund Reshi lived a life of complete self-abnegation and renunciation, feeding purely on a meagre, vegetarian diet, herbs or a cup of milk, if and whenever offered to him by the village women.

Nund Reshi spent a full twelve years in meditation inside a cave at Khimoh where (according to M.L.Saqi's Edited "*Kuliyat-i-Sheikh-Ul-Alam*," 1985 and, A. D. Majoor's thesis, Nund Reshi) he is said to have written a 2,500 verse life story of Gautam Buddha. But, only three verses of this are said to be existent. The story is said to have been translated into Persian by a bilingual sanskrit scholar.

8.3.2 The Controversy

There is much confusion among scholars about the precise dates of birth and death of both Lal Ded and Nund Reshi. They are, however, agreed on the contemporary nature of Lal Ded, Nund Reshi and Budshah' i. e. 14th and 15th centuries, Nund Reshi's poem quoted by G.N Gowhar in his book 'Sheikh Noor-ud-Din' records only the life span of 65 years, without mentioning any dates. However, S/Shri Amin Kamil, Saqi, Majboor, Ganhar, Pushp, Rehbar and Bamzai and T.N. Kaul Journalist could be trusted with the work of removing the confusion. Some writers record only of the two dates while others age only.

A tentative, bird's eye-view of the dates by modern scholars brought up to date, (as given in the table below) may facilitate their further research work:

8.3.3 Research Work

S. No.	Date of Birth	Date of death	Life Span	Origin	Brought up to date by
1.	1356AD	-	-	Dand Mishkit	M.J. Akbar
2.	1377AD	1442AD	65 Years	-	(June 1991)
3.	1677 Bik	1777 Bik	100 Years	-	S. N. Koul
4.	557 Hijri	842AD	85 Years	-	A.D. Majboor
5.	1377AD	1438AD	61 Years	-	Kashmir Behind the Vale
6.	1378AD	1438AD	60 Years	-	J. N. Ganhar
7.	-	-	65 Years	-	Nund Reshi's Poem quoted by G.N Gowhar
8.	779 Hijri	-	-	Kuliyat-i Sheikh-UI-Alam-1985	M.L Saqi JK Academy of Art, Clture & Languages

Note:

1. Nund Reshi's age, according to his poem and as calculated from Sahaz Quosum is the same ie 65 years.

2. Again according to Sahaz Quasum the year Lalleshwari's death, and year of birth of Nund Reshi coincide though they evidently were contemporaries for quite some time.

8.3.4 Eco-Scientist

Nund Reshi's pithy saying 'Food will last as long as forests last' is a clear indication of his innate foresight and intuitive knowledge. He uttered these words six centuries ago even before the present concept of ecological balance was born and the U. N. Plans turned into hectic efforts for maintaining the environmental balance and upholding the eco-system. This conclusion however, does not and should not be misunderstood to mean any disregard for such earlier knowledge or practices whatsoever, and wherever they might have existed even much before that time.

For Nund Reshi, as for others, forests temperate the climate, help cool the atmosphere and maintain the parabolic cycle of water, clouds, rain and snow, rivers, lakes and oceans. For him the forests and the undergrowth check the rapid flow of rain water down the slopes, enabling it to seep in, only to reappear in the form of springs elsewhere. They make the snows melt

gradually by regelation, keeping them clod and frozen and thus, ensuring a regular supply of water all the year round.

Thus they help in irrigation and food production and other modern medical, industrial and technological pursuits.

Thus as the saint-poet conveys in his important message, that cultivation and supply of good material, so essential for the existence of life, depend on plants of which forests are a part. If the forest areas are denuded gushing rain waters would erode the slopes and soft areas. Much land would be lost and also the grain

Hence the truth of the saint's pithy saying

8.3.5 As Democrat and Botanist

Born in rural atmosphere six hundred years ago Nund Reshi while giving a sermon to the village folk, cautioned them, on moral and ethical grounds, against damages to or destruction of plants in general and herbal plants in particular. For he is believed to have pointed out that plants are living things which are born, grow and die in due course. He says:

"Let us avoid harming plants in any way as far as possible. Let us not unnecessarily trample over green grass. For, each plant has a purpose in life and use for others."

The rural folk, took no time to understand the true purport of the sermon. But they seem to have been quick to point out to the saint that they were squatting on the green turf which had lost its lush greenery and turned dull whitish under the pressure of their body weight and deprivation of light and air.

Acknowledging the truth of their argument, Nund Reshi is believed to have sat on a big rock in meditation for twelve years, thus accepting the verdict of the people as an unparalleled democrat and a botanist by instinct. The honour of being an instinctive democrat and botanist of Kashmir goes to him indeed.

Source: Gems of Kashmiri Literature and Kashmiriyat

8.4 Nund Reshi's Shruiks - (Translated)

P. N. Razdan (Mahanori)

1. OMNIPRESENCE AND ALL PERVADING NATURE OF GOD

*He, who was here, is also there;
He's in possession of house everywhere
He's the Pedestrian, and He the Ruath, (old type of vehicle)
He's all in all; invincible and obscure!*

Note: The sufi concept of the Omnipresence and all pervading nature of God is analogous to the science of totality or KULA system of Kashmir Shaivism in essence wherein TRUTH OF TOTALITY shines everywhere. According to this mystic experience and knowledge, there is no creek left anywhere to distinguish between man and man or any other form of life.

C/O Lalla Vaakh No one, 35

2. SELF REALISATION:

*He's beside me and
I'm beside Him,
Blissful I feel with Him,
In vain, I went a—seeking Him*

*In strange lands, for
My Friend Himself graced me
in my own House !*

Note: C/P Lalla Vaakh No 3&8,35

3. SOCIAL CONSCIOUSNESS AND SHARING PROSPERITY AND PAIN.
*Mere chanting of "Shiva, Shiva "
Won't awaken Shiva.
Ghee you'd consume in
Kangri fire
Feed on ghee and
Be strong or
Give it to other,
Should you not need it.*

Note: C/P Lalla Vaakh No. 4, 48 & Preface.

4. RELIGION IN ACTION:
*Feed the Hungry, if you can,
Ask not the caste of the naked:
Gain a thousand times
The virtue,
Nor would you ever lose it,
Dear brother, Nunda !*

Note: C/P Lalla Vaakh No. 49 and preface

While infusing a spirit of humanism and social good into his people Nund Reshi lays stress on need-based and not to creed, colour or language based sympathy. A man's inner sun should shed its lively light equally on all rich and poor, yellow or green, living or non living alike.

**5. Within the cluster of rills was lost,
A sparkling spring;
A saint was lost amongst
A gang of thieves;
Amidst a family of duds was lost,
A learned Pandit Guru;
A gorgeous swan was lost,
Amidst a flock of crows !**

Comments

The most probable allusion of the saints, among others, is to the group who, according to legend, had become thieves under the stress of adversity. But the saints' inborn divine disposition wouldn't keep him in tune with them. Unlike Valmiki, celebrated author of Ramayana, who was a robber before becoming a saint of high order and poet of eminence, Nund Reshi was born with the Moon of Divinity shining within him.

As a child he was once forced by his colleagues to break into a house at night to collect a booty of precious articles but to their amazement he stole only a mortar from the kitchen in order not to make his victim suffer too much . Again, the barking of dogs pricked his conscience and awakened his soul. Thenceforth he is said to have embarked on the spiritual path in seclusion.

**6. Bathe out of sight,
Meditate in secluded isolation,
Be regular in action don't forget,
But---- out of sight;
Should you forget, you'll regret !**

C/P LV No. 7

**7. Should you not shun inner anger,
How can you, your external wrath ?
Unless you cleanse you inner mind
You'll lead an ostriched life !**

C/P LV No. 38

**8. You gave sugar to sugarcane,
And honey to the honey bee
You gave grapes to
The winding vine:
You gave the deer stag
The forest green:
Such are your godly gifts !**

**9. You've to bear lightning and thunder,
Tornados and storms at mid-day;
You've to bear with lifting mountain weights,
You've to bear with your palm aflame,
You've to pass through a rolling mill,
You've to tolerate eating poison and fire!**

C/P LV 34

Note: This trio of saint poets, like all others of the international tribe of saints, clearly hints at the hurdles faced by them in their search after mysticism and god realization.

**10. Fear, attachment and violent thought,
I shunned,
For a whole life-time,
I followed
But one path, and then,
Bathed in the waters of contemplation,
I walked to a sojourn
In blissful seclusion !**

C/P LV 17

**11. He who sits in vigil
At His door,
To him, He 'll offer
His own sherbet (Medicine);
His devotees are different but,
Only with one prayer;
He, whom He blesses,
Will prosper!**

C/P LV---,PP---

**12. Avariciously, I filled my belly
-----draped the devilish frame
Of my long cage !
Robbed off was, I even
Of the ever-withering leaf:
Sinned I and earned
The vice !**

**13. O self, lend ear to
The gossip that's going on;**

*This's the knell of
The warrants of death !
A day before like a lamb
They'll take you to the butchers,;
With a tuft of grass, they'll
Lure you on to the grave !*

*14. Should you have a friend,
Sacrifice yourself for him.
From time to time, a friend
Is a breezy dawn !
Earth, earthly be, free from
Birth-Re-birth;
What need remains for
Protective defence ?
Or
What need remains
To fear fate?*

*15. What catch will a crow, show
To the lion of the jungle ?
How can dhup (incence) surpass wine,
In fragrance?
What light can a candle
Show to the moon?
What a salvation will Shiva give
To a-----*

Note: Wine refers to the intoxication of the light of the inner moon of self consciousness as per Lall Ded's inner vision and that of sufis of wine like Maulana Rumi, Parmanand and other mystic saints.

*16. Death's a lion.
How can you escape him?
From a flock of sheep
It 'll pick you up like a lamb.*

*17. A blonde I, dressed and combed,
Became a queen of beauty:
Bewitched my youth was by flowers.
Frozen as snows on mountains
I was and
Blown off by WULAR wind; (biggest lake in Kashmir)
Divested by robbers, I was
In dazzling bewilderment:
Ruffled my half-cooked rice became
By bran and husk
While a poor man's day
Passed for a year.*

*18. Yee alone, O Deva, are the need
Of the hour,
To set the earth a-right in beauty ?
Yee alone, the shadow of skeletons:
Yee alone awaken
Without the tolling of bells;
What's virtue and what vice ?*

Note: The idea conveyed is that God alone is dispassionate and responds to plaints and prayers of his devotees in whichever way they approach HIM.

**19. Shiva 's there, spread with
A fine net:
That's Death and
That's Pilgrimage !
Should you not die while living,
How else can you, when dead ?
Recognise self from yourself
By contemplation.**

**20. Straight I came and,
Straight I'd go,
What harm can the crooked do
To a straight man ?
I fully recognized and
Merged with Him there
What can the recognized do
To the recogniser ?**

C/P L.V. No. 3

8.4.1 21. ARADANA

Introductory: Sages and seers are scientists in the spiritual and mystic fields whereas, scientists are spiritualists in the scientific field. Their work is guided by certain individual principals, aims, and objectives. Both observe, firm hypothesis, experiment and come to natural conclusions by pragmatic experience, one, in the confinement of the laboratory and the other in the calm seclusion of nature, under the guidance of a Guru.

Whereas one, experiments with materials and energy, the other probes the transcendental and mysterious in a more subtle way, purely in the mental laboratory using its peculiar tools of energy and contemplation,

Nund Reshi, like other saints, gives vent to what he aims to achieve in his spiritual exercise in this invocation. He observes strict discipline, renouncing all pleasures of life till he blooms and achieves perfection in the domain of godly life.

Naturally he rises to the status of the most popular saint alongwith his contemporary, Lall Ded. Both guided, the modes and ways of cordial conduct of all Kashmiris for more than six centuries to date. No wonder therefore, that Budshah, the great king of Kashmir, took pride in giving shoulder to Nund Reshi's dead body, when he left for eternal abode. Like Lalleshwari, Nund Reshi self addresses this message, of inclusion of high standards of spiritual conduct, humanism and desirable social behaviour in man as if he himself was not a symbol of good qualities and virtues.

**a) That Lana of Padmanpora
Gulp by gulp who nectar drank,
And saw Shiva face to face everywhere
Grant me that boon, O Deva!**

**b) The speaking damsels of Loka—Bhawan
And the dumb socio—human ones,
Took flight with birds;
Grant me that boon, O Deva !**

Note: The girls wholeheartedly helped others and served birds with grains before their spiritual flights.

*c) Janak Reshi of Dandakvan.
Living on herbs, wild fruit, was
A perfect Bhakta, a pearl among devotees !
Grant me that boon, O Deva.*

Note: Janak Reshi of Handwara jungles lived on herbs and wild fruit. His was a perfect, realised soul.

*d) That Miran Reshi of Reshivan,
Who fed a thousand people
And created an averse free atmosphere:
Grant me that boon, O Deva:*

*e) A shepherd followed rams. T
hat very moment
He was beckoned off
And flew to the Heaven
At Harmukh:
Grant me that boon, O Deva:*

Note: A pious shepherd, while grazing his flocks of sheep and goats on the HARMUKH slopes, had face to face Darshan of Shiva and merged with him!

*f) You blessed the sadhu at Ishabar,
He recognised you and served you.
Blessed you, also Rugzal?
The pashmina—seller:
Grant me that boon, O Deva !*

Note: i) Refers to an ancient gyanyogi sadhu of Ishabar near Nishat Garden.

ii) Rugzal replaces Rukhsanjhai as suggested by J&K Academy of Art, culture and languages commentator.

iii) Refers to a Pashmina trader who after renouncing the world achieved self realisation.

g) That wise, hunch-backed, Kubza.

Note: Refers to hunch backed Kubza of the Ramayana.

*h) You blessed Sadhwani, the vapbodh,
He drank the milk of intimacy I
In full,
You blessed Shethi Srikantha,
The sidha;
Grant me that boom, O Deva !*

Note: Refers to Sadwani who was blessed with Lord Shiva's Darshan at the foot of Shankaracharya hill.

Refers to Yogi Rajsiddh Sri Kant of Srinagar, Probably Lall Ded's Guru. References quoted above by courtesy of Sahaz Quasum June'91.

*i) In time should I act for my future;
Maybe, it may bear fruit ;
Meekly'ld I exhort Him;
Maybe, He may bless Nund too !
Grant me that boon, O Deva !*

8.4.2 VEGETARIANISM

22. As stated elsewhere, Nund Reshi respected all life as himself . Even on his death bed, he simply could not be persuaded into fish-eating to revive his fast-deteriorating physical condition. (Ref.

He was a strict vegetarian as is clear also from his own shruk quoted in "Kuliyate-Sheik ul Alam." Quote from Fida Mohd Hushain's book." The beautiful Kashmir Valley" published by Rema publishing House New Delhi. "Sheikh Noor-Ud-Din gave his mystical experiences and teaching in the Kashmiri language. Khawaja Habib-Ullah Naushari in 16th century composed his poems in Kashmiri."

*My darling, why should you poach on fish
My darling understand this truth
Those, who devour the living
To nourish their own lives
Would feed on the poison of sin !*

Ref. L.V. 11.

8.4.3 23. DOES WRATH BECOME A MUSLIM ?

*a) Does wrath behave a Muslim?
Should you display anger, you'll
Jeopardise your purpose.
Wrath'll prove to be a robber
Of your treasures !
Does wrath become a Muslim ?*

*b) What happened to him who
Was deposed from his heavenly, throne ?
Numbness overtook that Muslim and.
He fell a victim to the devil: and
Hid in a boat man's
Does wrath become a Muslim ?*

*c) Should you peep into the
Veiled harem of strangers,
It'd be like showing
A red rag to the bull,
Causing hue and cry, din and noise !
Does anger become a Muslim?*

*(d) Study daily, the Quran,
The lighthouse that'll
Scare away the devil in you:
Does wrath become a Muslim?*

*(e)The Lord'll Himself accompany
The guest;
Give something in His love and,
Remember, what you give to others
Will remain in store for you:
Does anger become a Muslim?*

*(f) In a far off field,
They 'll leave you buried and,
Rot'll your flesh, and organs too,
Underground and*

*You, Yourself will have to be
Answerable for your own deeds,
Does wrath become a Muslim?*

8.4.4 24. HE, WHO PLOUGHS THE FIELD, REAPS THE CROP:

*(a) Be conscientious in doing your duty, man,
Plough the field, to harvest the crop
In autumn and. provide for
Your comforts in the cold month of magh:
He, who sows the seed, reaps the crop !*

*(b) Blind is the spring, keep't in view,
Be quick to collect the material of
Seed, and store's at home:
Don't you lag behind, for
The spring is elusive, man;
He, who sows the seed, reaps the crop !*

*(c) Lend no ear to falsehood now,
Winter lies ahead, and freezing cold
Daughters and daughters-in-law, children
And grand-children regard him, who
Ploughs the field and reaps the crop:
He, who sows the seed, reaps the crop !*

*(d) Deluding is the hunger;
Yoke it to the plough,
Scare't away.with the whip of fasting;
Thus wouldn't it hinder the ploughshare:
He, who sows the seed, reaps the crop !*

*(e) Keep the kit trim and your ploughshare;
Attend to your ablutions, it's dawn,
The usual time for prayers.
Shun listlessness, caste and pray:
He, who sows the seed, reaps the crop !*

*(f) Full of weeds is your field,
Enter with determination and deweed it
Bend you must in blazing heat
To deweed your field:
He, who sows the seed, reaps the crop !*

*(g) Devote your time to Islamic work:
Shun lassitude, Kalima's the lighthouse of
Your knowledge at home:
Duly attend to daily "Nimaz" pilgrimage and
Graceful alms-giving: For,
He, who sows the seed, reaps the crop !*

*(h) Many times, the seed is the ear of crops:
Many times more though latent, is CORDIALITY.
Still more beneficial is contemplation of God:
He, who sows the seed, reaps the crop !*

*(i) Beware of the watchman:
Day by day, He counts the stockpiles:
Truly fear the Landlord;
He, who sows the seed, reaps the crop:*

*(j) The king of fate, pounces on the crop:
Rise with confidence and show.....
The attainments of your endeavour:
And when, the king's gone,
Contemplate on" What He said ":
He, who sows the seed reaps the crop !*

*(k) Estimates of every field, they'll make and,
Name every kind of fruit.....
Collecting all, they'll seal the stores:
He, who sows the seed, reaps the crop !*

*(l) They'll force him divide bagfuls of crops
And make him, sort out grain by grain.
Reaping, collecting, separating, winnowing,
They'll induce him to weigh the harvest;
He, who sows the seed, reaps the crop*

*(m) With the display of a sword,
To begin with, they'll warn him against
Irresponsible sloth, listlessness, and
Ask him to be careful in future:
God forbid, maybe, they'll get him lashed too:
He, who sows the seed, reaps the crop !*

*(n) Slowly, imperceptibly, life has waned,
O you, unmindful fellow, haven't you
Realised the truth by now?
Look, how you have robbed your own self:
He, who ploughs the field, reaps the crop !*

*(o) Don't you be too fond of glamorous mansions
Elegant ZOONA DUB (well decorated verandah)
For,
None but you have to account for your deeds:
What use's preaching to the unwise?
He, who sows the seed, reaps the crop !*

*(p) You careless man, realise yourself
You 'll reap here, what you've sown there,
They'll weigh all sins and virtues:
He, who ploughs the field, reaps the crop !*

*(q) Take the mukkadam (headman) to plead your case
Before the king of kings:
Nund Reshi knows well the Landlord:
He, who sows the seed, collects the fruit !*

Note: The poem is multi meaning, Two of them at least, are conjugate: Whereas one reflects on the political conditions of the time, the other refers to the kingdom of God.

C/P Parmanand's Karma Bhoomika

8.4.5 25. WHAT HAVE I GAINED AFTER BIRTH ?

*(a) With full settlement, I had come
On business to the world;
Lured on the way I was
In the market place:
Behold how I bore with*

*The master mind:
What have I gained after I was born ?*

*(b) Why did I overhear my friend
At HIS house?*

*Who'll keep that laughing Joker
In good humour ?*

*Virtuous is my mind but
Plenty of sins have I gathered:
What have I gained after birth ?*

*(c) Spinned has the thread of
My necklace of pearls:
Consumed by fire
Have been all my gains
Reduced to dust or consigned to flames
Has been all my wealth:
What have I gained after birth?*

*(d) My living body fell here in chaos,
Good it is to sacrifice it for the times:
Wouldn't it honour the Lord?
What have I gained in life ?*

*(e) Originally crooked Couldn't reach the source
How I tried to uphold the dignity of
My home:
Keep in fear of HIM, O thee rider and pedestrian:
What have I gained in life*

*(f) Peddlers are on the move
From city to city:
Isn't it time for you
To burn in the fire of hell?
Kneeling low, Nund Reshi prays and
Exhorts the Lord in all humility:
What have I gained in Life ?*

8.4.6 26. Bear with: As you sow, so shall you Reap

*(a) Bear with the calls from the compound, friend.
Respond to your inner voice:
As you sow here, so shall you reap there.
Sow and reap, sow and reap.*

*(b) "Occupy the grave" does the blonde;
Nought's mine:
Sow and provide for food here.
If only,
For fear of harm to the heart:
Sow and reap, sow and reap.*

*(c) Theists and atheists will be questioned;
Contemplate on the Prophet and the Lord,
Smash the spear and the Gurza; (Lethal weapon of Hanuman)
Sow and reap, sow and reap.*

*(d) When the case reaches the divine court.
There,
From whom can we hide our untruth?*

*Beware! none but you, yourself'ld have to
Bear the consequences of your deeds:
Sow and reap, sow and reap.*

*(e) Virtue and vice'ld they weigh there, brother.
Think ahead, of life there
Lest your gains turn into losses,
Sow and reap, sow and reap!*

Source: **Gems of Kashmiri Literature and Kashmiriyat**

9.0 RUPA BHAWANI

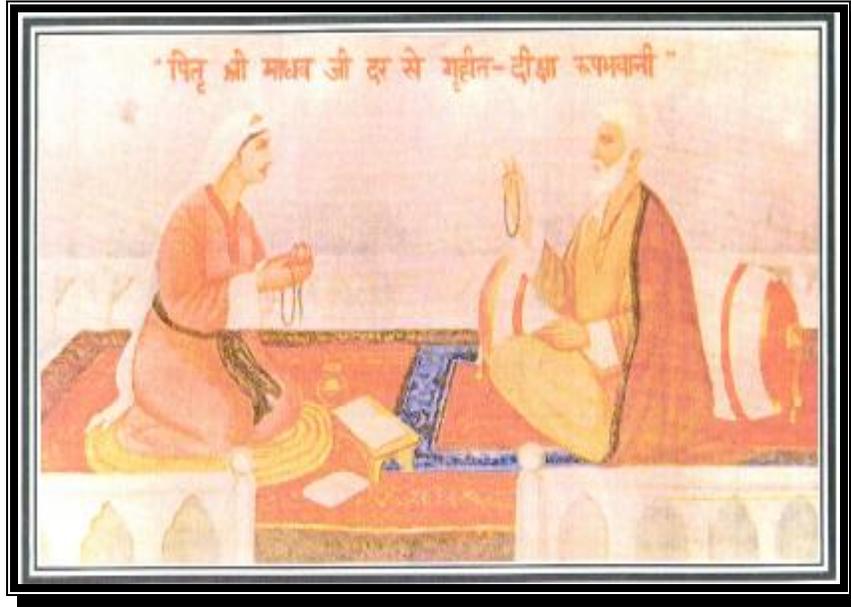


Rupa Bhawani (1620-1720)

9.1 Rupa Bhawani

Rupa Bhawani was the second great mystic poet of 17th century. She had a great and deep experience of ups and downs of life. The worldly sufferings showed her the path of spiritual life. Her spiritual 'Guru' was her father Pandit Madhav Joo Dhar who initiated her into the mysteries and practices of yoga. She gave rich mystic poetry to Kashmiri language. In her poetry, we can find the influence of both Kashmir Shaivism and Islamic Sufism.

*Selflessness is the sign of the selfless;
Bow down at the door of the selfless.
The selfless are of the highest authority,
The kings of the time and the wearers of the crest and crown.*



Roopa Bhawani (Alakheshwari) and her Guru (father) Pandit Madhav Joo Dhar

These lines show her spiritual understanding. According to her dissolution of self is essential for Realisation. Rupabhawani was a great preacher of yoga. She describes her yogic practice. The different stages of 'yoga' and awakening of Kundalini has been described in the simple language of common men:

*I dashed down into the nether regions and brought the vital breath up;
I got its clue out of earth and stones;
Then my kundalini woke up with nada;
I drank wine by the mouth,
I got the vital breath gathered it within myself;*

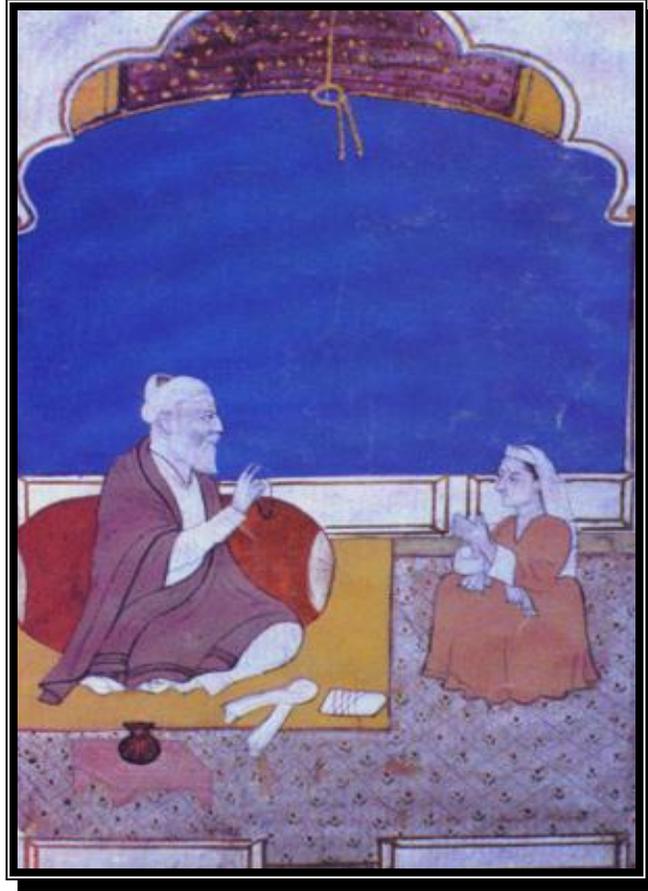
This great mystic poetess had experienced the truth and then explained the same. Such mystics had real experience and not a bookish one. That is the reason why this mystic poetry in every language is considered great after so many centuries.

9.2 Roopa Bhawani in Kashmiri Language and Literature

Dr. A. N. Raina

9.2.1 SANSKRIT

In Kashmir, poetry has ever been true to religion and thought. In early times Sanskrit was the Language, mainly Musical. It was the voice from the depth of heart, not a verbal exercise, tinged with any affectation but a simple and sincere expression of thought and knowledge preserved for the good of mankind. It was the glorious age of this language in Kashmir when scholars and researchers dived deep to unearth the treasures by the giant intellects whose characteristic zeal for divine wisdom enabled the preservation of knowledge and spiritual experience.



Roopa Bhawani (Alaksheshwari) and her Guru (father) **Pandit Madhav Joo Dhar**. (*painting*
Courtesy of: Koshur Samachar and Shri C. L. Dhar, Pamposh Enclave, New Delhi, India)

9.2.2 SHIVISM

It is believed that phonetic distortion and decay in Sanskrit gave rise to Apabhramsha followed later by Prakrit. Kashmiri emerged as a language towards the close of the 14th Century when it assumed some form in its original base of Sanskrit. Till then Shaivism had expressed itself as the doctrine of Self recognition. The doctrine had made an appeal with its love and devotion regarded as the two main planks of this faith. Giant intellects like Abhinava Gupta, Utpaladeva, Kshemendra and other seers and scholars had enriched this thought and culture with their

admirable contributions. As a doctrine of soothing thought Shaivism inspired love and affection in human hearts discarding all the painful and tortuous methods of seeking God. This soothing faith found a wide appeal across the Himalayan frontiers into Tibet, China, Kabul, Kandhar and Bactria. Intensive intellectual activity covered a vast field of literature in Philosophy, Poetry, Chronicle writing and rhetoric. Kashmir was not a forgotten land of mountains intellectually and spiritually isolated but an illumined literary heaven shedding light of knowledge and wisdom across its Himalayan borders.

9.2.3 ISLAM

With the coming of Islam, Hinduism comes under the influence more refreshing and deeply protestant. Islam, it is to be admitted, gave a jolt to Hinduism in its spiritual slumber of ages. The Buddhism with its virtuous path for life had discarded the fighting element in man. However, the onslaught of Islamic faith could not alter and dive deep into the philosophic and spiritual attainments of Hinduism. May be Islam in its beginning resorted to force but, as time passed force created a subdued apathy in hearts. Passion, rage, and physical conquest made no appeal to people and failed to overpower the good in man. The result was the reflective minds dominated head and heart imploring the need of some sort of spiritual discipline for the daily conduct in life. It was this feeling that stimulated into a rational view when Sufism emerged as a doctrine of oneness based on tolerance and unity. It was a healthy approach to religions based on essential unity for human happiness. A harbinger of peace Sufism or mysticism served Islam in the real sense of the term.

9.2.4 KASHMIR

Sanskrit suffered change and what followed is known Apabhramsha that followed Prakrit. Philologists traced the merger of languages in time and in Kashmir both Apabhramsha and Prakrit ultimately merged into Kashmiri - the modern Kashmiri of Lal-Ded.

Kashmiri, it may be mentioned developed as a language, not as a dialect. It emerged in a scientific manner well rooted as it was in its antecedent Sanskrit. Within the Panjal ranges and Kajinag mountains Kashmiri became the mother tongue of those peace loving inhabitants who steadily settled to an appreciation of regular phonological correspondences of certain words and syllables which indicate common roots. Sounds may have suffered a little change here and there in certain positions to a degree but the identity was retained. To mention some of the basic words at a glance still in common use among many are Prakash, Sumran, Shabd, Rishi, Sunder, anand, Samaya, Prabhat, etc.

Koshur as Kashmiri is called belongs to the Dardic group profoundly affected by the Indo-Aryan spoken Sanskrit and during over two thousand years a part of the "Sanskrit Culture World" it was Yogeshwari Lalla (Lal Ded) whose Vaakh laid a sound foundation of this language. Her Vaakh passed from mouth to mouth in the beginning. Her four-line stanza Vaakh in Kashmiri poetry forms the base of modern Kashmiri. Her verse was uttered with all seriousness saturated as it is with philosophic thought to be pondered over and not only sung and enjoyed. These stanzas became food for deep thinking and in the words of Lal Ded herself "My Guru gave me but one precept - from without withdraw your gaze within, and fix on the inmost self."

It is necessary to mention here that her Guru "Siddha" had an important place in her spiritual attainments.

Philologists may have taken pains to study the original form of Kashmiri but the conclusion is accepted by all that Bhaskara's Lalla-vaakh in Sharada script is to be taken as authentic in modern Kashmiri.

It may not be a digression to say that language has its own rhythm of origin and growth. Time punctuates its pulsation. Nature provides elements for its enrichment. It is then that a language assumes its form. It enters deep into human mind. Some believe, may be rightly too, that the origin of a language is always divine. It flows out or even sprouts forth from the depth of soul destined to be its progenitor. So has it been with Kashmiri also.

9.2.5 LAL-DED

Lal-Ded the well known saint-poetess irradiated a deep and impalpable influence with her verse during the 14th century. Her verse had a transforming power of engendering purity and human brotherliness.

Her message found the response among the people irrespective of caste and creed. Her sayings established a tradition of harmony and tolerance which is our priceless heritage. There is not a Kashmiri, Hindu or Muslim, who had not some of her Vaakhs at the tip of his tongue. Her Vaakh or pithy poems containing spiritual experience documented in a form which is of immense value to the seeker. These are inspired speech.

Undoubtedly the progenitor of modern Kashmiri Lal-Ded is the first among the moderns not only chronologically but in modern quality of interrogation and expostulation, to her poetry. Her poetry comes alive for us even today.

The close of the 14th century brings to end the age of Yogeshwari Lalla. Till then her Vaakh had established itself and spread like fire in the valley of Kashmir. A climate of modern Kashmiri had covered itself the entire mind and senses of people who readily accepted this Shaiva-Mystic whose minstrel wanderings earned for her the name of divine Mother.

9.2.6 NUNDRISHI

It is time to see how after Lal Ded followed the line of Sheikh Noor-ud-din, reshi of Chrari-sharif in his Shrukhs educating spiritually the people of Kashmir for over fifty years (1377-1438 A. D.), in a simple vernacular. The theme, form and tone, was essentially that used by Lal-Ded in her Vaakhs. Of literary interest these pithy verses formed the correct coin of common speech. It is true that Persian influence intensified, but it also is true that interests widened towards a humanist awareness. The modern Kashmiri was taking birth towards an enlightenment and understanding. New words bring new life and standard of literary language develops towards a form of linguistic discipline. By the close of 13th century the age of Yogeshwari Lalla and Nundrishi come to close. Till then her Vaakhs and his shrukhs had established as a corrective for human mind and intellect.

9.2.7 RUPA BHAWANI

By the first water of the 18th century when Rupabhawani passed away (1721 A.D) Kashmiri language had undergone considerable change during about three centuries since the time of Lalleshwari. With the coming of many Iranians from Iran where persecution by Timur drove away rich crop of scholars and seekers. Essentially these Savants after finding an asylum the happy valley of Kashmir ushered is that branch of Islamic mysticism known as Sufi-cult. And when Rupa Bhawani appeared on Kashmir scene a synthesis of Hindu and Islamic mysticism had already come to birth. In the back drop of this harmonious attitude to life Rupa Bhawani became its vocal interpreter. She became a seer for search but she was Search for herself having attained perfection from her very birth. Rupa, a spring of spiritualism, was destined to attract people from all faiths. Rupa's life reveals a course of events divine indeed but destined to fulfill a purpose. There was spiritual illumination as it were from her very birth. Faith moves mountains as such the palatial house of Pt. Madhojoo Dhar, acquired a sort of divine dimension.

Rupa Bhawani will live so long as her verse is there. It is therefore, imperative that her Vaakhs be understood to the extent possible. In this respect a word about her verses will be to the point. Admirable as the attempt of Sh. T. N. Dhar, who brought out a volume on "Life, teachings and Philosophy of Rupa Bhawani" in 1977 is one cannot but value this attempt as a contribution to the literature and language of Kashmir. Any attempt as a critical study of her divine verse depends on a careful study of her text prepared by this studious researcher.

That Rupa was light herself, there is no doubt about it. Her utterances are saturated with wisdom, divine learning nothing unusual about her, spiritual experience and attainments. She admits herself to be the spark of great Brahman destined to proclaim "Soham". This message was readily accepted by the Hindus and Muslims alike. It is here that mention of Sufi thought seems necessary.

It has already been mentioned that many Iranians had come to Kashmir and there was an effective influence of Sufism here. These Sufi Saints like Shah Sadak who tried to measure his spiritual strength with Rupa Bhawani made him accept her superior attainments when Shah Sadak spent years in penance in upper Lar. The reply of Rupa Bhawani to Shah Sadak was "Surat-ma-zeth". By this time cultural mingling had effected itself and spiritual contacts had brought about identical views and approach to the quest of spirit. Hazrat Hashimbin-Mansoor had already declared "Analhaw" in 1900 A. D. The thesis his book "Kitabul Tawasoon" was "I am truth, God".

In Kashmir the times had changed since the day of Avantivarman (855 to 883 A. D.) of Utpal Dynasty, remembered even today with his temple at Awantipur. His court was adorned by two eminent poets Ratnakar and Anandvardhan. The modelling and drainage system and the dredging of the Jhelum mouth at Baramulla was taken up by Suyya the founder of Suyyapur (Sopore). It may be of interest to mention that the Tantrics opposed to the Brahmins were again in power for some years but rebellion and the economic devastation brought misery to the people. The Rajput of Lohar Dynasty ruled Kashmir like the rest of India for more than a century when Kshtriya rituals entered the Brahminic cult. As is common with despotic rule the whole period suffered from murders, suicides, corruption-material and moral- a record of which has been prepared by Kalhan Pandit who followed in the 12th century in the reign of Jayasinha. The mysticism from Iran was a slow but soothing stream aimed at raising up of moral and spiritual values and oneness of God. Therefore, Kashmiris readily accepted it in all its traits in which the Reshi order of Nundrishi was also contained. So Kashmiri thinking evolved out of a happy amalgam of Sanskrit, Buddhist and Islamic values.

Now is the turn of the text of Rupa Bhawani's verse, in diction, style and cumulative expression.

9.2.8 STYLE

We owe it to a Brahmin Pandit Kesho Bhat of Rainawari Srinagar, who prepared the text of the Vaakhs of Rupa Bhawani originally in Sharda, seen and revised by late Pandit Hara Bhat Shastri before these were published by Kesho Bhat himself. "These Vaakhs of the Divine Mother do not seem to have gained much currency during the last 250 years. There is no record of any writing to show that any attention was paid to interpret these verses". It begs not for a rise towards climax. The reasons are not far to seek. It required a careful study of the original text now available in a volume. Original to the core these Vaakhs need reading over and over again. This diction requires thought and understanding of a high order for which it is essential to have some basic knowledge of Shastras. Her thoughts as expressed in her verse leave much to ponder over before realising the meaning. Thus there is more than what meets the eye. It is then that a reader becomes aware of the fact that Rupa Bhawani had a Yogic stand, all her own, in the

domain of spirit. She is perfect and as such there is no beginning of an idea of philosophy in her verse. Each verse has its own rhythm in thought and its effect in totality.

It is not the earthly verse but an outburst, rushing out of the depth of her soul where senses and mind vanish that void where mystics enter a trance. The gaze is thus deeply within (Antarmukhi)

<verses>

In such a state of concentration there is the bliss of union with the Infinite. The translator has however taken pains to explain the subtle principle of Muladhara in these ten verses strewing the refrain for clarity and concentration. It will be no digression to say that the physical span of Rupa Bhawani's movement has not been beyond ten miles from Srinagar and its environs within the Hariparbat side of the Anchar Lake with its mountain amphitheatre with the Lar area where Shah Sadiq lived at a higher elevation. Rupa Bhawnai settled here for her meditation at Vaskur. The famous shrine of Rajni Devi at Tullamulla is situated in this area. Shankaracharya hill and the Mahadev Peak look over this region.

9.2.9 COMPARISON

It may not be fair to weigh words of Rupa Bhawani and compare these with other poets of Kashmiri. There being nothing very common in vocabulary, such an attempt will lead us nowhere. In thought, however, Rupa Bhawani states her Yogic preparation with that of Lal Ded. Accepting like Lal Ded the guidance of Guru before whom ego vaxes with divine logic, one attains the state of divine union. A close study of the Gita and the Vakhs will reveal an identity of views. Here again Gita (iv,46) be referred to for each shape of experience in the practice of Yoga. Well-versed with the Yogic technique of Lal Ded, Rupa Bhawani explains how unity of self with the supreme self required "Anugraha" to free the spirit off the shackles of matter. In this respect Rupa Bhawani does not go beyond the teachings of Gita.

<verses>

Does this form the basis of her miracles? Well versed in Spand Shashtras as she was, it may not be easy to appreciate the verses that follow the verses of 1st canto. It requires spiritual intelligence to follow the Vakkhs in the second canto (113 verses) in which the great union is propounded. Rupa Bhawani is above the experience of pleasure and pain. The translator has rightly remarked that "The truth of developing inward vision through these utterances can be understood by the practice of Yoga". The purpose of Yoga is summarised thus:

<verses>

"World teacher, ever in service, worthy of infinite worship."

While going carefully through the words in Sanskrit and sound close to each other in meaning Kashmiri similar or identical may appear, but no separate word in Kashmiri is either attempted to be searched or found. It is not the homophony of words, but the regular phonological correspondence of words and syllables indicating common roots.

Modern Kashmiri bears no resemblance with the language of Rupa Bhawani and no amount is worthwhile to make such an attempt. New words brought new life to this language and in keeping with the traditional cultural mingling the Kashmiri got enriched. Its vocabulary depending on its prefixes and suffixes enabled a new coinage of words. The sweetness of Kashmiri poetry is due to that mystical quality of individual coinage making it fit for poetry. There is no abuse of foreign words. They are set well in sound and meaning.

There is nothing beyond God in Rupa Bhawani's verse. And if life aims at aimless journey one wonders how in a mysterious wandering one can get peace of mind.

The third canto signifies perfection exclaiming "I am that great Brahman". Such verse, to be intelligible, needs grace of God (Anugraha). Since Samadhi comes in it so it becomes an exercise in yoga that for perfect to a degree far beyond is not within comprehension. It appears that no effort is made by Rupa Bhawani to make herself intelligible to the non-sanskrit speaking people. Reason is not far to seek. Gushing out of wisdom in Sanskrit completely annihilates environmental consciousness which is an attempt at a low level to that of bliss of Heavenly peace, the domain of Supreme Brahman. "Greatest miracle of biological power is the development of speech in man which finally developed into power of writing," Very rightly remarked by Shri T. N. Dhar, at page 156.

Coming to the 4th canto of Vaakhas it ends the divine message being the last. Her spiritual quest is an open penance aiming at spiritual unity. Renunciation leaps to actual attainment. "Having nothing yet hath all" is often quoted. It applies to the teachings of Rupa Bhawani. To give up worldly pleasures for some time never means complete renunciation. It is a period of penance a sort of spiritual preparation aiming at purification of the devotee. She depends on wisdom enshrined in the Vedas to give up duality. Respecting tradition, custom and kinship, she only bridged the gulf with yoga. Samadhi she stresses, siddhi, skill, prosperity, gush out from the source. Personality is to be, free from decay and death.

9.2.10 CONCLUSION

Linguistically speaking Kashmiri appears not to have emerged as an accepted mixture of Sanskrit and Persian words as is proved to be later in the middle of the 19th Century. In the time of Rupa Bhawani whatever the reasons, the diction in her verse shows no synthesis of, Sanskrit and Persian. Assimilation appears to have taken along time as her verse is not even a half baked mingling of words from Persian. it is not easy to erase her contribute on to Kashmiri language. Had it not been for her rich verse (about 150 verses) to Kashmiri literature-"obscure and obsolete" verse as mentioned in haste by some critics - the poetess may have left little impression on Kashmiri. This is not to be forgotten that the verse of Rupa Bhawani is to be studied in isolation and not as an evolutionary wave in the synthesized current of Kashmiri. A recluse as she was her spiritual domain was a divine Kingdom of her own, unconcerned with the people around her.

Source: Glimpses of Kashmiri Culture

9.3 The Life of Devi Roop Bhawani

Aparna Dar

[This is an account of the life of Devi Roop Bhawani who was born in Srinagar on Jyaistha Paurnamasi, AD 1621. She was a fully illumined soul who because of her divine nature was said to have been born of the elements of Divine Mother. The author of the article is a lecturer at the Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur]

In the early seventeenth century, a Kashmiri Pundit named Madhav Joo Dhar lived in Srinagar. Madhav Joo was of a deeply religious and philosophical temperament, and his daily life was conducted in an impeccably religious spirit. He worshipped the Supreme Being (Ishwara) in the form of the Divine Mother Sharika (Durga).

In Srinagar, there is a hill known as Hara Parvat or Sharika Parvat where the Goddess Sharika is worshipped since ancient times. Legend relates that, long ago, some demons troubled the local people, who prayed to Goddess Durga for protection. She took the form of a Sharika (Maina) bird and dropped a large chunk of earth on the entrance to the cave of the demons to seal them inside the hill. She then took Her abode on the hill to ensure that they did not escape.

This gave the name Sharika Parvat to the hill. The Goddess is represented there by the Sri Chakra (a regular geometrical mystical pattern) in sandy rock, which is anointed with red lead (sindur). The deity is also called Chakreshwari. Regular worship has been offered at this shrine for centuries.

To this shrine of the Divine Mother Sharika, Madhav Joo came every day to worship in the auspicious hour of Brahma Muhurta (pre-dawn). He would chant Her Holy Name, with his face glowing with devotion and his entire being absorbed in Her worship. For hours he would be so transported, the fire of devotion lighting up his entire being with Divine radiance. Thus did this devotee of the Divine Mother pass his days.

It is said that on the first day of the Navaratri (the nine days dedicated to the worship of the Divine Mother Durga) in the month of Ashwin, in the year 1620, Madhav Joo arrived for worship at midnight, to uninterruptedly worship on this most auspicious occasion.

He commenced his worship and, with all reverence and attentive detail, he glorified the Supreme Goddess, his heart filled with adoration. When his worship was complete, the Divine Mother is said to have appeared before him in the form of a radiant girl child.

On seeing this divine child, Madhav was so filled with intense joy and bliss that he lost all consciousness of his external surroundings, and tears of joy and devotion flowed from his eyes. He understood that the mother of the Universe, Mahamaya, was Herself in front of him in the form of this child.

Thereupon he worshipped the girl, placing flowers at Her feet and incense before Her. With fatherly love he offered Her sweets. The Mother was pleased with the simplicity and love of Her devotee, and granted him a boon. Madhav requested Mother, 'Since you have appeared before me in the form of a child, take birth in my house as my daughter.' The Divine Mother granted the boon and vanished. So goes the legend of the birth of Roopa Bhavani.

In the following year 1621, in the month of Jyeshtha, on the Pournima Tithi (full moon), in the early morning a daughter was born to Madhav Joo's wife. He named his daughter Alakshyeshvari, which means one who is imperceptible and indescribable; it refers to the Goddess in the formless non-dual aspect.

In her father's house, Alakshyeshvari's years of childhood were passed in the company of devotees. Madhav Joo was held in high esteem, and spiritual seekers came from far-away provinces to meet him. Alakshyeshvari's spirituality blossomed early in these favourable conditions. As she grew older, the spiritual tendencies within her became increasingly manifest. Her father, Madhav Joo, himself became her guru and gave her spiritual initiation. Nevertheless, in accordance with the prevailing customs of the time, her father arranged her marriage to a young man of the nearby Sapru family.

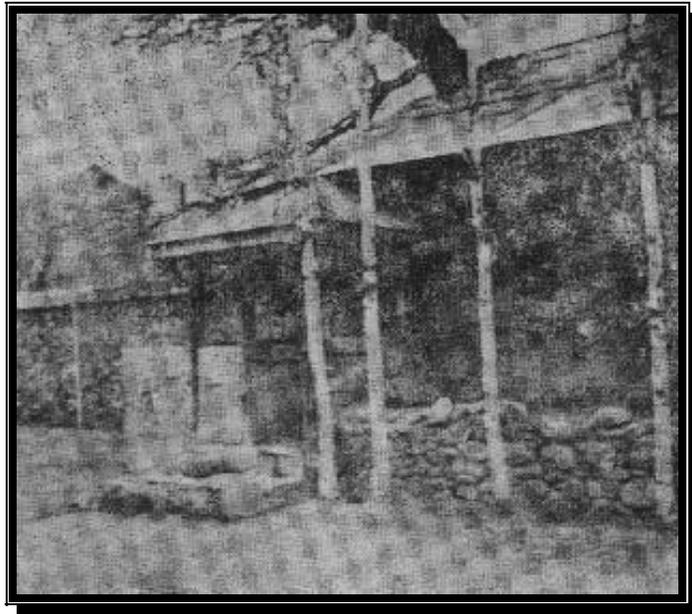
However, Alakshyeshvari's married life was unhappy. Her husband, Hiranand Sapru, totally lacked all understanding of Alakshyeshvari's spiritual nature; and her mother-in-law, Somp Kunj, had a cruel disposition. Alakshyeshvari's life in this house was difficult and joyless. Her mother-in-law was always finding fault with her. Once she accused Alakshyeshvari of going out at midnight, and made Hiranand suspicious of his wife's fidelity.

The truth was that at midnight Alakshyeshvari would go to perform her sadhana (spiritual practice) at the shrine of Mother Sharika on Hara Parvat. One day Hiranand followed her to see where she went at night. Alakshyeshvari knew this. When she had nearly reached the shrine, she turned around and asked Hiranand to join her. However, as he was steeped in ignorance, he is said to have beheld a vast expanse of water, impossible to cross, between himself and her and, disheartened, he was forced to return home.

Yet another incident is related of her life in her in-laws' home. One day, on the occasion of some festival, Madhav sent his daughter a pot of rice pudding (kheer). Alakshyeshvari's mother-in-law, on seeing the kheer spoke sarcastically, 'What will I do with this small pot of kheer? I have so many relatives; this is hardly sufficient for them.' Alakshyeshvari replied, 'Please give this kheer to as many persons as you like, but don't look inside the pot.' Somp Kunj began to ladle out the kheer and gave it to everyone she knew. But the supply of kheer seemed endless! Finally, furious with anger, Somp Kunj looked inside the pot to find just a few grains sticking to its sides.

The next day at dawn, Alakshyeshvari cleaned the pot, and placed it in the flowing current of the Vitasta river, speaking thus, 'My father is doing his morning prayers (Sandhya) at the Diddmar Ghat. Go and stop there.' The pot floated down the Vitasta river and stopped exactly where Madhav Joo was doing his Sandhya. Madhav picked up the pot and took it home.

Even after seeing such miraculous incidents, not just once, but many times, Somp Kunj stubbornly refused to change her ways towards Alakshyeshvari. Hiranand also remained foolish and ignorant. Finally, when living there became unbearable, Alakshyeshvari left her husband's house never to return. It is said that this Sapru family's fortunes rapidly declined thereafter.



The birth-place of Devi Roop Bhawani Navakadal, Srinagar.

Alakshyeshvari renounced her father's home as well, and decided to seek the eternal abode of the Supreme Being. She wanted to become absorbed in sadhana. Seeking a solitary retreat, she selected a location to the north-east of Srinagar, known by its ancient name Jyestha Rudra. Here she did intense tapasya (austerities) for twelve and a half years, and began to glow with the fire of spirituality. At this point, people, attracted by her spiritual radiance, began to come to her in such large numbers that she decided to leave the place for a more solitary retreat.

She moved to a village Mani Gaon, in north Kashmir, on the banks of the Ganges in the foothills of the Himalayas. On festival days many people would gather at Mani Gaon for a dip in the sacred waters. In these beautiful surroundings Alakshyeshvari chose to do her sadhana. On a forested hill-top, far from the village, she made a hermitage for herself. For a long time she remained in solitude, deep in spiritual practices.

It is said that none of the villagers at Mani Gaon knew of Alakshyeshvari's existence, until a certain miraculous incident revealed her presence to them. A cowherd boy used to take his cows to graze at a place which, unknown to him, was close to where Alakshyeshvari was absorbed in meditation. The boy noticed that a beautiful white cow left the herd every day at noon, and later returned on her own accord. One day he decided to follow the cow to see where she went.

Following the cow, he reached a clearing in the forest. There he saw a beautiful woman dressed in ochre robes seated in meditation, her long hair flowing loosely, her face ashine with a heavenly lustre, and her eyes filled with a divine light. The cow, as though under a spell, stopped before the radiant ascetic. The ascetic woman got up and lovingly caressed the cow. The cow of her own accord poured its milk into the ascetic's bowl until it was full!

On seeing this wonderful vision the cowherd boy lost consciousness. When he milked the white cow he found to his astonishment that she gave even more milk than usual.

The cowherd confided his experiences to Lal Chandra, the village head. Lal was filled with reverence and devotion. He visited Alakshyeshvari, and then came daily to serve her in whichever way he could. By this time she had completed another twelve and a half years of spiritual practice in that hermitage.

We will from here refer to her as Bhavani (the Goddess as the power originating the world) or as Bhagavati (the Goddess with the six attributes of supremacy, righteousness, fame, prosperity, wisdom, and discrimination). This is in keeping with the common belief in Kashmir that Alakshyeshvari was an incarnation of the Goddess Durga.

Lal Chandra told the villagers about Bhavani and the miraculous happenings attributed to her. But when she began to receive a great deal of public attention, she left the village, preferring to continue her spiritual practices in solitude. She went to dwell in a hut on the bank of the Shahkol river. Even there she attracted devotees.

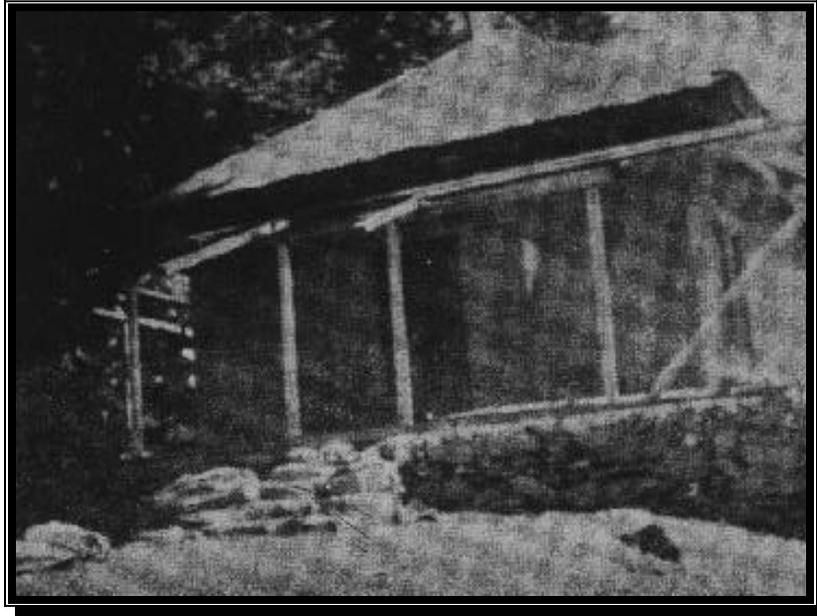
Once, a spiritual seeker fascinated by her aura of spirituality asked her, 'What is your name?' Bhavani replied, 'My name is Roopa (one who has realized her own True Self).' The seeker further questioned her, 'Why do you wear this ochre dress?' Bhagavati replied, 'This ochre represents the state of being in which the individual soul has taken the colour of the Supreme Being.'

Bhavani lived for many years on the banks of the Shahkol, absorbed in meditation. Finally, when large numbers of devotees again began to flock around her, she once more moved away to a quieter spot, in the village of Vaskora. Legend says that the Naga, (snake) Vasuki, did his tapasya in Vaskora to attain the Grace of Shiva. When his sadhna bore fruit, he asked Lord Shiva for a boon, 'May I always adorn you as a necklace.' Bhagavati greatly liked this spot and began to dwell there.

Bhavani's grace now began to shower on her numerous devotees. Many miracles are attributed to her. There was a young boy, blind from birth, who served her with great devotion. Bhavani's compassionate heart was moved by his sad condition. She gave him a stick and asked him to dig the earth with it. He immediately obeyed her. Many devotees gathered nearby, watching. Soon water began to appear from the hole that was dug. Bhavani said to the young boy, 'Wash your eyes with the water that has come forth.' As the boy did so, his sight was restored and the crowd of devotees were amazed.

Bhavani had a brother, Lal Joo, who was very devoted to her and took her as his guru. Lal's son, Bal, began to stay with her in her service. Once, Lal requested Bhavani to educate his illiterate son. Bhavani gave the boy a pen and some paper and ordered him to write. Thereupon,

miraculously, the boy began to write fluently like a highly educated person. The devotees were overwhelmed by this transformation.



The room in the village of Lar in which she performed her sadhana.

In Vaskora, Bhavani began to give spiritual instruction to Bal Joo Dar and Sadanand Muttoo in the form of poetical verses, called Vakhs. One hundred and forty-five of her Vakhs have been transmitted to us. After twelve and a half years (periods of this length seem to recur in Bhavani's life) had elapsed in Vaskora, Bhavani returned to Srinagar on the entreaties of her numerous devotees, and began to live in Saphakadal.

Many years had elapsed, and Bhavani now yearned to be released from her earthly body. On the Saptami Tithi, in the month of Magha, in the year 1721, Bhavani's soul took flight forever. The legend relates how her devotees, filled with grief, carried her body towards the cremation ground. On the way they met the village head who, on seeing the funeral procession, asked whom they were carrying. On hearing that it was Roop Bhavani, he was very startled, for he had just seen Bhavani walking down the road by which he came! The devotees looked inside the coffin and found nothing there but some alak (locks-of hair) and some flowers. The alak are even today worshipped with great reverence.

Although she is not with us now, Roopa Bhavani's Vakhs are so vibrant with her presence that on reading them one feels that she is very near, giving knowledge to her children with powerful words of renunciation, and dispelling ignorance with the weapon of Eternal Truth. May she guide us on the true path of knowledge, towards the Divine Light. (Courtesy: Prabuddha Bharata)

The author writes: The first volume in English on Divine Mother Roop Bhavani was Sri Trilokinath Dhar's pioneering work (Rupa Bhawani - Life, Teachings and Philosophy) published in 1977 by All India Saraswat Cultural Organization, Srinagar. However the present author has obtained the Vakha of Devi Roop Bhavani and her life history from Sri Roop Bhavani Rahasya Upadesa (1977) published in Hindi by Sri Alakh Sahiba Trust, Srinagar. Further, she has gained an insight into the legends relating to Sharika Bhagavati and Her Peetha at Hari Parvat from Bhavani Nama Sahasra Stutih by Sri Jankinath Kaul 'Kamal' published from Ramakrishna Ashram, Srinagar.

Source: **Koshur Samachar**

9.4 Rupa Bhawani - "Mother Sharika assumed human form for her devotees"

M.L. Bhat (adapted from SANTMALA by Dilbar Kashmiri)

Rupa Bhawani (Samvat 1681-1771), daughter of Pandit Madho Joo Dhar of Khanqahi Sokhta (Safa Kadal), Srinagar, shines as a bright star in the galaxy of mystic saints and sufis who have adorned the firmament of the Reshiwari (Kashmir). Rupa Bhawani's descendants, from her paternal side, called Sahibi Dhars, have carried her message and memory forward. They have been observing her nirvaan ceremony with great piety and devotion to this day both at Safa Kadal, the place where she was born and also attained nirvaan, and at Waskura in Baramulla district which she graced for many years after the initial tapasya at Khanqahi Sokhta, Wusan near Ganderbal, Manigam in the same area, and Chashma-i-Sahibi, adjacent to the renowned Chashma-i-Shahi on Zabarwan hills in Srinagar district.

9.4.1 *The Legend*

Legend, both oral and recorded, has it that Pandit Madho Joo Dhar, himself a devout Devi-Bhakta, performed Parikarma of Hari Parbat regularly for years, come summer come winter, praying to the Mother to fulfill his aspirations. The Mata, pleased with his devotion, appeared to him one day saying "speak out your wish". Madho Joo, prostrated himself at the Mata's feet, imploring, "Great Mother, Creator of the entire Universe; you are so kind to me, I wish you are born as my daughter". The wish was granted, and Rupa Bhawani graced Madho Joo Dhar's home on Zaishta Pooranmashi in Samvat 1681.

Brought up with affection, and respect, Rupa Bhawani was married to a learned youngman, Pandit Hiranand Sapru, at an early age with great pomp and show. Rupa Bhawani was, however forced to forsake Grihast as her in-laws, including Pandit Hiranand, could not reconcile to her spiritual bent of mind and the meditative spells she had got used to at her father's abode.

9.4.2 *The First Miracle*

Her estrangement with the in-laws accentuated after a miracle which her mother-in-law failed to comprehend. It is recorded that at a special yagnya performed at the Sapru's place, the kulguru of Dhar's could somehow not give a satisfactory account of his capabilities. Not that he was not learned, but the other Brahmins present made fun of him. He could not put up with this. Feeling humiliated, he wanted to leave unnoticed without partaking of the prashad. And that is why and how the Mata's first miracle took place. While the kulguru was trying to get away, he was accosted by Rupa Bhawani. She requested him not to go away like that. "It is not appropriate to go away without taking food" she told him adding "you, Sir, seem to be very tired. Why don't you have a bath in the river (Vitasta) and feel fresh and then take food?" The kulguru could not refuse. He had the bath as advised, and while coming back he was accosted again by Rupa Bhawani. She gave him a full glance, welcoming him to the dinner. This glance transformed the Brahmin into a well-versed and confident guru. Bowing to the Bhawani, he partook of the food, and after that recited a full poem in praise of the Mother spontaneously, winning applause from one and all, including those who had tried to humiliate him only a few hours earlier.

This miracle of the Bhawani invited strong reaction. Her mother-in-law got infuriated, she provoked her son and made it impossible for Rupa Bhawani to live in her house. And this brought about the Sanyas of the Mata. She returned to her father's place, bared her heart to him. Consoled and encouraged by the father Rupa Bhawani started her meditation in right

earnest. However, finding regular meditation somewhat difficult in a grahast, she shifted to Wusan, Manigam, Waskura, Chashma- i-Sahibi, etc. in that order, creating ashrams at every spot holding spiritual discourses, attracting devotees, Hindus and Muslims alike, and performing miracles. A real sanyasin, she was the mother to all irrespective of caste or creed.

The great old chinar tree on the bank of Sindh river in Manigam, the culmination of a half-burnt branch planted by the Mata with her bsnign hands was, till some year back, standing as a mute but living witness to her spirituality. A devastating fire in Manigam was extinguished by her through a mere glance. Fish cooked for Shivaratri in the house of Pandit Lal Chand in Manigam started crawling over to the wall when it was learnt that the fish had been cooked in spite of her presence in the house. A potter's son got his eyesight back on completing the digging of a well at Waskura at her bidding. A shankh-shaped spring in Chashma-i-Sahibi appeared in the Zabarwan hill area when Rupa Bhawani shifted there, giving the hillock its name.

Mata Rupa Bhawani attained mahanirvaan at her father's place, where she spent her last days. It was the Saptami of Magha Krishna Pakshya in Samvat 1777. The day is since known as Sahib Saptami, observed by all the Hindus in Kashmir.

9.4.3 Mahanirvaan

On hearing that the Mata had breathed her last, Muslims of the locality demanded her burial according to Muslim rites as she was to them the Rupa Aarifa, a Muslim divine. They sought and obtained orders of the then Moghul Governor of Kashmir, and also any assistance to force the issue on the Mata's kith and kin and the large number of the Hindu devotees. Perturbed, her brother Pandit Sansar Chand Dhar prostrated himself at the feet of her mortal remains, requesting her to intervene "to save me from embrassment which would for ever stick to the clan as a black spot". Lo and Behold, the Bhawani resurrected herself, and addressed all those present, including Muslims. To her brother, she said "stand firm by what you want to do and God will help you. Offer some bread and shirni (sugar balls used in Kashmir on impartant occasions) to the Muslim brethren and bid them good-bye."

Sansar Chand and others did as they were told. Completing all the rituals, the body was taken to the cremation ground on the usual woodan plank bedecked, of caruse, to suut the occasion. But when the time came to place the body on the funeral pyre, it was only the shroud and a few flowers. Rupa Bhawani had merged with the Supreme, Mother Sharika.

Source: Koshur Samachar

10.0 KRISHNA JOO RAZDAN



Krishna Joo Razdan

10.1 Razdan Sahib's Puranic Picture Gallery

Krishna Joo Razdan's "Maharaja Mahadevun Che Chhui Saal" is a superb Puranic picture gallery. In this devotional lyric cosmos is the studio-cum-exhibition hall, Lord Vishnu is the model and Krishna Joo Razdan, incognite as Narada, is the inspired literary painter. The bard's devout imagination, telescoping Lord Vishnu's variegated associated exploits, objectified them on literary canvas. Like impressionistic painters, Krishna Joo paints diverse fleeting associations conjured up by his unique model. Each quatrain in the lyric is a picture-frame exhibiting two or more pictures. Here the model remains unaltered but there are constant changes in the perspective.

Narada, journeying through the vast cosmic expanses, informs Lord Vishnu about developments in the celestial regions. He invites Lord Vishnu to Lord Mahadeva's marriage. Krishna Joo Razdan, incognite as Narada, paints ingratiating memories associated with his unique model. In the incarnation as Lord Rama, Lord Vishnu showers bounteous love upon Mother Sita. By quickening up the associated memories of the readers, Krishna Joo conjures up the picture of Lord Rama and Mother Sita enjoying perfect conjugal bliss.

10.1.1 Radha-Krishna Deep Love

He juxtaposes with it a picture depicting deep love between Lord Krishna and Mother Radha. In the same frame he fits in the portrait of Lord Krishna lifting the Goverdhan mountain to protect the cows, cowherds and calves against the torrential rain sent by jealous Lord Indira to lash the Gokul landscape. Next Krishna Joo paints Lord Krishna enjoying butter offered with love by Ma Jessuda. He conjures up infant Krishna with butter-besmeared mouth and face playing pranks about Jessuda. Alongside with this picture is placed the picture of Kubza whose hunch is set right as she unhesitatingly applies sandal paste to Lord Krishna's forehead meant especially for Kans, the king of Mathura. This is followed by a suggestive painting of Sudama offering Lord Krishna rice chaff to eat.

Shrimad Bhagwatam mentions that Sudama was one of the dearest boyhood friends of Lord Krishna. One cold rainy evening he was munching some grains. On enquiry he attributed chattering of his teeth to intense cold. This false statement subjected him to perpetual penury in his later life. Once he is directed by his wife, Sushila, to seek help of his boyhood friend who is now the king of Dwarika. In the royal place, Sudama is received very warmly. Lord Krishna himself washes clean his tired feet. Sudama has brought for Lord Krishna some chaffy rice. The Lord enjoys a handful of the offering of love. He is prevented from enjoying more by Rukmini. She fears that the kind Lord will bestow everything upon Sudama rendering his own person and family impecunious. This incident too is the content of a picture in Razdan Sahib's picture gallery.

10.1.2 Bhagwatam & Ramayana Juxtaposed

Sugreva, the king of Kishkindha, is driven out of his capital city by his unrighteous brother Bali. Along with his faithful lieutenants, he retires to a hilly eminence where Bali is destined to die under a curse pronounced by a sage. Lord Rughvir befriends Sugreva and, after killing lascivious Bali, he places upon his head the crown of Kishkindha. Vibhishana, deserting the camp of his demoniacal brother Ravana, joins Lord Rughvir in Kishkindha. He is enthroned in exile as the king of Lanka. Bali Dhaanav, the demon king, is bestowed the underworld for his generosity. These three Puranic episodes are held by a single picture-frame forming the fourth quatrain of the poem. Feeling envious of the tremendous popularity of Lord Krishna, Lord Brahma, the god with three heads, hides away all his calves and cowherd companions in a cave. Lord Krishna creates all the stolen creatures himself. This abashes Brahma. Lord Krishna forgives Brahma's insolence. Krishna Joo paints this episode without going too deep into its ontological implications. He feels ecstatic while painting Lord Krishna dancing with the gopis. Devki, the dear sister of Kansa, is married to the Yadava prince Vasudeva. When the newly wedded couple are driven towards Vasudeva's country, the elements predict Kansa's death at the hands of Devki's offspring. Thereupon, Kansa imprisons Devki and her husband. He assassinates Devki's six babies in succession and Lord Krishna, the seventh, is spared by divine intercession. As Lord Krishna grows up, he kills Kansa for the restoration of moral order. Leaving his foster mother, Yashodha, in Gokul, he comes to Mathura. At the request of Devki, he brings to life the six children which she has lost. These children later become Gandharvas. This Puranic episode forms the sixth picture-frame in Razdan Sahib's picture gallery.

On the completion of his education at Sandipini's hermitage, the guru asks his illustrious disciple to bring to life his son drowned in a naval tragedy. Lord Krishna jumps into the sea and retrieves alive the son of his guru. Krishna Joo paints this episode in the seventh and the eight quatrains which run into each other. In Shrimad Bhagwatam there is mention of Shankhasur. This demon unleashes terror and unrighteousness all around. When pursued by superior righteous strength, he hides himself in the vast conch shell which forms his abode. Lord Krishna jumps into the sea and challenges to a battle the demon who has been perpetrating horrible atrocities upon the devout. Shankhasur is killed and his conch shell, called Panch Janya, becomes a coveted possession of the Yadavas. This episode too is the content of one of the pictures lightly sketched by Krishna Joo.

10.1.3 Spirituality in Devotion

As the Pandavas are befriended by Lord Krishna during their exile, they recognize the essential divinity of their kinsman. They start supplicating before him in deep devotion. This is resented by a contemporary prince, Shishupal, who regards Krishna nothing better than a common cowherd. Shishupal nourishes grudge against Krishna also for eloping away with his sister Rukmini, Lord Krishna, the merciful, forgives Shishupal's impertinence a number of times. He cuts off

Shishupal's head with his rotating disc (Sudharshan Chakra) as the latter persists in pouring forth abusive language. This episode too forms one of the painted canvases in Krishna Joo's vast picture gallery.

With his carnal passions perfectly under control, Lord Krishna dallies with 16108 ladies and maidens. Razdan Sahib paints this fact with light verbal strokes. Lord Krishna's separate dalliance with each gopi is an objectification of the essential oneness of God. Lord Krishna sows rubies from a string which, first changing the sapling, develop into sizeable trees bearing rubies on boughs and branches. Collecting these rubis the messenger from Radhika grows quite rich. In this picture-frame, Razdan Sahib also includes the spectacle of a pearly shower sent by Lord Shiva to lash the Kashmir landscape. At the end of the frieze, Razdan Sahib juxtaposes the portraits of Lord Vishnu and Lord Mahesh with their divine consorts Laxmi and Gauri.

10.1.4 Razdan's Perpetual Struggle

Spiritual progress enjoins an arduous effort. Spiritual bliss and enlightenment are realizable only through constant meditation and assiduous observance of high psycho-physical discipline. This is manifest from Krishna Joo Razdan's all devotional lyrics. We observe him as a seeker constantly seeking to realize Brahman. Sometimes, he is a dualist with an impersonal concept of God. Soon he becomes a dualist with a personal concept of God. Again he feels that Advaita Vedantic monism is the highest truth. The bard's imagination, surcharged with devotional ecstasy, keeps shifting constantly from one point of view to the other. He is obviously living the experiences which he is communicating through his devotional lyrics. Being a true devotee of God, he feels divine contemplation an existential indispensability. He is painfully conscious about the dwindling numbers of Kashmiri Pandit community. He fears its complete extirpation due to the prevalence of numerous social evils.

Razdan Sahib is proud of Kashmiri language which is the principal medium of his poetic expression. He regards it dearest to the Mother Goddess. He is convinced that salvation for Kashmiris is attainable only by singing praises of the Mother Goddess in Kashmiri language. Razdan Sahib's poetry objectifies his perpetual struggle for comprehending the mysterium tremendum enveloping man all around.

10.1.5 Subjective Idealism

Idealism is the school of philosophy which regards God or Brahman as the ultimate reality. This Philosophy is the bed-rock of all religions of the world. Some philosophers believe that man and God are essentially one. God is attainable by directing sense perceptions inwards towards the self. This is the cardinal viewpoint of subjective idealists. Essential Brahminism too is subjective idealism. There are other idealists who, recognizing the existence of God, consider Him an entity separate from man. For them, God directs the course of nature. He is an entity outside man. Man is answerable for his actions to God on the day of resurrection. This type of idealism is called objective idealism. It is the main philosophic content of the religions like Islam and Christianity.

In some of his lyrics, we observe Razdan Sahib marshalling the basic postulates of objective idealism. There are others in which subjective idealism is the poet's predominant philosophical preoccupation. He discerns greater rectitude in the subjective philosophical postulates. In one of his poems, he advocates observance of Islamic practices for the enjoyment of spiritual bliss. Razdan Sahib's lyrics objectify the great bard's patient perpetual struggle for comprehending the mystery of existence. He perpetually investigates the validity of polytheistic and monistic religious concepts. He is sometimes a polytheist objectifying his devotion separately for Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh. In such moods, Rama and Krishna are two different incarnations.

But at the same time, he regards all the principal gods of Hindu pantheon a single entity. God appears to him permeating every cosmic object around. In the concluding couplets of Maharaja Mahadevun Che Chuui Saal, he reveals his belief in the essential monistic nature of God. He longs for the realisation of the eternal truth of advaita vedantic monism and desires to realise his essential oneness with God.

Source: **Koshur Samachar**

10.2 Achhe Posh Gav Lachhi Novuy Heth

Prof. Kanhaya Lal Moza

Achhe Posh Gav Lachhi Novuy Heth is a superb devotional lyric in **Pt. Krishna Joo Razdan's** *Shiva Pranae*. Here the immortal Kashmiri bard rapturously celebrates Uma's union with Chandrachud. The beautiful flowery metaphors illustrate the saint-poet's deep devotion for Lord Shiva and his Divine Consort, Shakti. The fragrant lyric scintillates numerous flowery hues and tinges. The poetic artifact reveals unique sensitivity of the great devotional poet's visual and olfactory perceptions. Into the flowery fabric Razdan Sahib entwines some eternal idealistic verities. The lyric, as a whole, reflects the unique sancity of Kashmin Hindu wedlock. The predominant mood objectified is devotional repute and ecstasy.

Shiv Pranae is transcreation of Shiva Mahapuran. This devotional literary work opens with the saint-poet's invocation of Lord Ganapati to bless him with the talent for narrating the story of Shiva's union with Shakti. According to the poet, Lord Ganesha, the Onkar-shaped omnipresent god, is the bestower of all kinds of boons. A habitual contemplation of his divine form, dispelling impediments, blesses a devotee with the kinds of successes. Wearing pearly necklaces, he commands Lord Shiva's Rudra legions; he is the vanquisher of Lord Indra and Lord Vishnu, the god with a trunk and a single tusk is the dear son of Shiva and Shakti; he is invited before all gods to bless sacrificial fires, he is the principal attendant of Adi Shakti; the god with four arms, wears red garments and holds his court at Ganpatyar; he carried his four weapons in his four hands for the destruction of demons and maleficent giants.

Pt. Razdan Joo prays to Lord Ganapati to destroy our ignorance with his single tusk which he uses as a stylus and to destroy our sins and wrath with his axe and other weapons. Lord Ganesha, the infallible dispenser of justice, is worshipped at all holy places before his elder brother, Kumar Kartikeya. This invocation, replete with rich mythological allusions, has been an important item in the devotional repertoire of all Kashmir Hindus for the last several decades.

The invocation of Lord Ganapati is followed by thanksgiving to Sad Guru. For Razdan Sahib, Sad Guru is none other than Lord Shiva himself. He prays for the nectar of bliss and light amidst enveloping gloom. He longs for the realisation of Shiva amidst the trammels of the illusory cosmos. Through the exercise of temperance, he desires liberation from the shackles of lust, wrath, avarice, pride and possessiveness. The practice of evil deeds has obliterated from the poet's vision, co-itenment, thoughtfulness, dharma and divine contemplation. He earnestly desires being ranked amongst saints who attained shivahood through intense sadlma.

Pt. Krishna Joo believes that spiritual bliss is realizable through the exercise of Yogic discipline.

He longs for the revelation of the truths enshrined in the Upanishads. He craves for the attainment of Brahmanand. He is conscious of the fact that contemplative concentration is realizable through rigid Yogic discipline through which he seeks divine grace for the purification of his mind and soul. He prays for Lord Shiva's grace in directing his sense perceptions of the eternal truth of Advaita Vedantic monism. The poet is perpetually conscious about the essential divinity of man.

After the invocation of Lord Ganesha and thanks giving to Lord Shiva, the saint-poet narrates the story of creation as enshrined in Vishnu Puran. According to him, Onkar is a symbolic representation of Lord Shiva from whom the illusory cosmos has originated. Cosmic illusion gave birth to Lord Vishnu, who created Lord Brahma. The entire universe and all life were created by Brahma's will. Brahma created Dakshinrajapati whom he tutored in all kinds of worldly affairs. Dakshinrajapati whom Razdan Sahib calls Brahmishi, a venerable Tapishi and the king of the gods, begot a large number of daughters, one of whom was Uma. The poet considers such a parent, who begets a daughter like Uma, blessed by Lord Shiva Himself. Uma is given away in marriage to ash-besmeared Shiva who is the master of the cosmos. Dakshinrajapati gives away the remaining 27 daughters in marriage to Chandrama and invites all his relations and friends to participate in these matrimonial festivities.

At this stage of narration, Pt. Razdan Joo ceases to be an omniscient narrator. He sketches lightly the tedium of straight and horizontal narration. His Dakshinrajapati is a typical Kashmiri Hindu deeply steeped in devotion. He is enjoying a beatific experience because Shiv Nath has become his intimate relation incognito as Dakshinrajapati. Razdan Sahib feels his being blossoming like a lotus. The mendicant friar, with the Ganga flowing down his hair, has married his daughter. He decides to feed him with boiled rice, butter-milk and sugar-candy. He is convinced that the mystery surrounding Shiva is impenetrable. Shiva's camphor-frame exudes poignant aroma. He is Himself Brahma, Vishnu and the Supreme Being, an ocean of knowledge and the mystery of Onkara. It is through the non-dualist attitude alone that He can be realised. Throughout Shiv Pranae, we observe narrative omniscience beautifully punctuated by dramatized narration.

Pt. Krishna Joo Razdan celebrates the union of Shiva and Shakti in his Achhe Posh Gav Lachhi Novuy Heth. This lyric is one of the most superb achievements in Kashmiri language. Here Shiva is Chandrachud appearing in dark fortnight and Uma is Param Shakti; here Shiva is Lachhinov and Uma is Achhe Posh. With the union of Shiva and Shakti, spring stalks the earth afresh and the cosmos blossoms like a lotus. Here the immortal bard luxuriates in cataloguing flowers. Among the Kashmiri saint-poets, none has made a comparable brilliant use of this technique for the objectification of his devotion. He resorts to a superb metaphorical use of flowers. Uma is Arni Posh and she is carried away by Shiv Ji who is Neov. Like a typical Kashmiri Hindu bridegroom, Shiva is greatly respectful towards Uma's parents. He carries away Uma after seeking the blessings of her parents. Shiva is Gloab; he is Sombul. Uma is Aarwal; she is Yemberzal. Razdan Sahib constantly enjoys the vision of Uma-Rudra. He supplicates before Lord Shiva for a boon of spiritual bliss. In spite of being a master of fabulous treasures, Shiva enjoys being clad sparsely. These persons need no ornaments upon whom the Creator of the universe showers His own bounteous benedictions. Being free from avarice, the material wealth has absolutely no significance for Shiva. He is the creator of both Brahma and Vishnu.

Razdan Sahib is convinced that spiritual progress is realizable only through regular Yogic exercises. The number of such exercises is very vast but an aspirant needs to practice only a few of them. Achhe Posh Gav Lachhi Novuy Heth is an inspired lyric which cascades forward like the waters of a mountain fall. It exudes the aroma of flowery vernal Kashmir landscape. He imparts superb pictorial touches to the short poetic artifact. The poet's love for Shiva rises to the level of God-intoxication. His Shiv Ji is a cliff supporting the crescent moon, he is vernal Neov; he is Golab, and he is Symbul. For him Uma is Param Shakti, she is an Achhe Posher she is Arni Posher she is Aarwal and she is Yemberzal. All these flowery metaphors conjure up before readers the celestial couple - Lord Shiva and his divine consort Gauri. Lord Shiva is the creator of the cosmos; He is the bestower of respectability; being free from greed and avarice, material riches have absolutely no significance for him. He supplicates before Lord Shiva for spiritual

enlightenment, leading to the attainment of salvation. Through a figurative use of Kashmin, he objectifies his intense love for God.

Just as there are physical phenomena, in the same manner there are mental phenomena. Both these types of phenomena are apodeictic realities. It is erroneous to extol one set of phenomena at the cost of the denigration of the other. Rational living consists of a simultaneous recognition of the importance of both these types of phenomena. With the modern man's ever-increasing interest in physical phenomena, we are likely to overlook its importance. This is the tragedy of modern civilization. For rejuvenating our springs of bliss, we will have to cultivate afresh the desire for enjoying it. Just as reading about philosophy can never be a substitute for reading philosophy, in the same manner, reading about philosophy can never be a substitute for reading poetry. Great devotional bards like Pt. Krishn Joo Razdan can be best appreciated only through first-hand experience.

(Prof. Moza teaches English in the Gandhi Memorial College, Bantalab, Jammu.)

Source: **Koshur Samachar**

11.0 PIR PANDIT PADSHAH

"The Puff That Kindled The Divine Spark In Him"



Pir Pandit Padshah

Reshi Pir Pandit was one of the greatest saints of Kashmir of the 17th Century A.D. He was a Karmyogin type of a Saint who helped people both in spiritual and temporal pursuits and he became famous as "PIR PANDIT PADSHAH HARDU JAHAN MUSHKIL ASAN" i.e. Emperor of two worlds and answer to difficulties of all kinds.

His father was Pandit Gobind Kaul resident of Batayar Mohallah Ali Kadal Srinagar (Kashmir). He was a well-to-do man but could not get a girl to marry. What worried him was that he was advancing in age. However, he ultimately succeeded in marrying a girl in Gushi Village of Handwara Tehsil. When the bride-groom came for the marriage ceremony to Ghoshi Village, his mother-in-law noticing some grey hair on her son-in-law's head fell into a swoon. After the wedding, the mother prayed at a nearby "Sacred spring" for her daughter. One day while praying earnestly at the spring, she heard a voice telling her "Oh old lady-go to your house and get your daughter to this spring. A bunch of flowers will come out of the spring let your daughter smell this bunch of flowers and your ambition would be fulfilled and your daughter will get a holy son". This was done by the lady and Pir Sahib's mother smelt the coloured bunch of flowers. When the time of delivery was approaching she left her parents house to go back to her husband. While travelling in a boat to Srinagar, she delivered a male child in the boat itself at Sopore in the year 1637 A.D. This boy was given Reshi as his name. A temple has been constructed at this spot and is known as "Resh Sund Mandar". Pandit Gobind Koul was extremely happy when his wife and child reached his home in Srinagar. When Reshi was 7

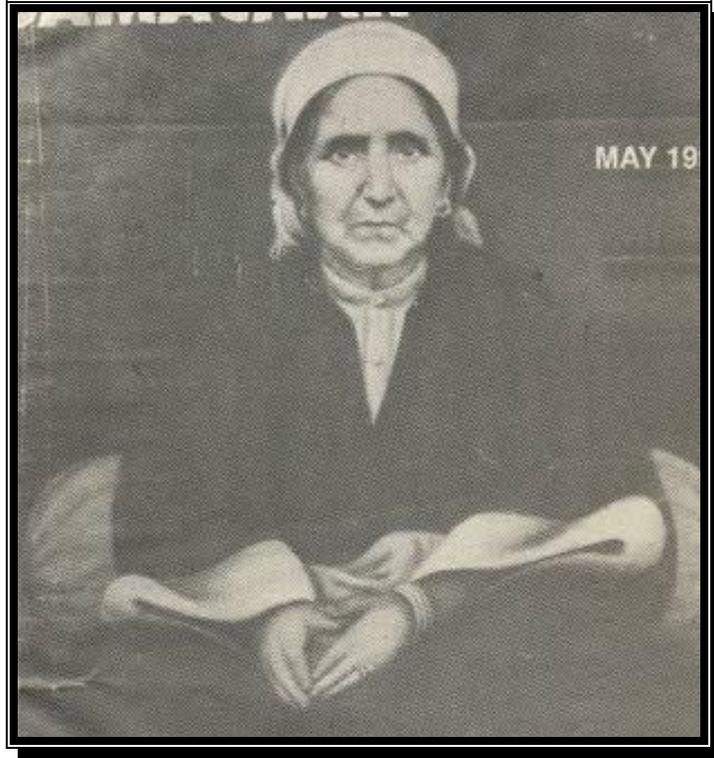
years old he was married and his father died soon after. By the time he attained the age of 12 years he became indifferent to worldly affairs and devoted his entire time to Sadhana in temples, visiting saints and searching for a Guru. With this predominant idea in his mind, he started circumambulation of Shri Sharika Bhagwati Shrine situated on a hillock in the city of Srinagar during nights for 40 days crawling all the way on his knees (a distance of about 3 miles). On the 40th day when he was in Deviangana (an open space below the hill) Goddess Sharika Bhagwati gave him Her Darshana and enquired of him as to what he wanted. He prostrated himself before Her and implored Her for being granted the boon of a Guru. The Devi ordained that the first man he would come across henceforth would be his Guru. After he left Deviangana and reached the place known as Hari on the northern side of the Hillock, he encountered a "MASTANA" saint sitting on a big stone and bowed to him, but he - the saint bolted away without saying a word leaving Reshi Pir far behind. The Mastana saint reached Reshi Pir's house before he himself reached there, asked Reshi's mother to give him Reshi's Hokka and smoking a puff or two told her to give the Chellum to Reshi for smoking after he returns home, and left the house. As soon as Reshi reached his home, his mother told him that a Mastana had come, who asked for his Hokka, smoked a puff and said the "Chellem" should be given to him (Reshi) for smoking. Reshi had a puff. The second puff kindled the Divine spark in him, his Jana Nitra opened and he became a God-intoxicated Trikaladarsh. This "Mastana" saint who initiated him was Pandit Krishna Kar. After his initiation he continued his intense Sadhana for 14 1/2 years. It is said that for a bath he would throw live red hot charcoal on his shoulders and body daily, for a number of years. After this period he became famous as "Pir PANDIT PADSHAH" as he helped many people out of their worldly difficulties. This news reached Aurangzeb who disliked his being called king "PADSHAH" and sent his messenger to Srinagar to arrest him and get him to Delhi. As the messenger met Pir Sahib, he made arrangements for his food. etc. and told him that he would accompany him the next morning to meet the king. By his miraculous powers he went to Delhi during night and enquired of Aurangzeb what he wanted of him. On seeing Reshi Pir, Aurangzaib trembled, became convinced of his spiritual prowess and greatness and wrote to Saif Khan Governor of Kashmir not only to cancel the orders of his arrest but also to keep a Jagir in his name in Devsar Village. Pir Pandit had fixed 14 pies as Niaz or offering to him. This practice is continuing even to this day among Kashmiri Hindus.

A contemporary of Pir Sahib, Mulla Ahmad Badkhshani used to have discussions with him on spiritual topics. Dara Shikoh was his (Mulla Sahib's) pupil. It is believed that he "Reshi Pir" influenced Mulla Sahib greatly with Vedantic thought and he induced his pupil Dara Shikoh to translate it in Persian and named the book "SAIR-I-AKBAR".

Source: **Koshur Samachar**

12.0 RICHE DED

T. N. Kaul



Riche Ded

Riche Ded, an eminent poetess, seer and philosopher of Kashmir, who lived through the twentieth century was shrouded in mystery. It was only twelve years after her death that her literary compositions first saw the light of the day. For a while it seemed that the illustrious Lal Ded of the fourteenth century had taken yet another birth.

Born in Srinagar in 1880, Riche Ded (literal meaning Noble Lady) was undoubtedly a loving, unsophisticated woman with tremendous yogic powers. She blessed all, irrespective of caste or creed, and wished everyone well. She never uttered a harsh word, lived a saintly life and quietly passed away in 1966. Her real name was Saenpat Devi.

Riche Ded composed 450 delectable 'vaakhs', using the common man's language which is still in vogue in the valley. These 'vaakhs', compiled by a poet and family friend, Prithvi Nath Kaul 'Sayil', were published by her son, Hari Krishan 'Fani', in book form at the end of 1980, her birth centenary year. Actually, the number of 'vaakhs' was much higher (1,000 according to her son) but many of them were unfortunately lost to posterity due to reasons beyond human ingenuity.

The husband of Riche Ded, Janardhan Kaul 'Sagar', was also a poet in his own right. He was well versed in Urdu, Persian, Arabic and English, besides Hindi and Sanskrit, and translated several books into different languages while in the service of Nizam of Hyderabad. He died in 1918 when Riche Ded was only 38. Now she was alone and woebegone but spiritual beacons guided her. She hid the agony of her soul in the deep recesses of her heart. The whole burden of the household had suddenly fallen on her weak shoulders. Unmindful of her grief she plied the spinning wheel round the clock to keep the wolf away. Her son was still in his teens.

As time passed by, she got Hari Krishan married. The latter found a job too but was posted mostly in far-flung areas. By then Riche Ded had shown signs of aging and her daughter-in-law, Danawati, was obliged to stay back in Srinagar to look after her. Plying the spinning wheel continued to be part of the daily routine of Riche Ded.. She poured forth her pent-up anguish in the shape of 'vaakhs' while the wheel of her life revolved, emanating a low weeping sound. Danawati watched this phenomenon with amazement. Whenever she was free from household chores, she recorded in Devnagari what Riche Ded murmured. This process continued for thirty years. She would slyly deposit the papers in a wooden almirah, layer upon layer, without caring to let anyone know what transpired within the four walls.

Riche Ded passed away, unsung and unwept, at the ripe age of 86 and Danawati forgot all about the invaluable treasure lying at the mercy of the moths. Twelve years later, while on her death bed, she mustered courage enough to divulge the 'secret' to her husband and the 400-odd 'vaakhs' were rescued from the clutches of whiteants.

Following are some of the representative 'vaakhs' of the poetess in English translation, together with the original:

12.1 VAAKHS

1.

*Kala chhay lalit, kala chhe shilp,
Kala chha sangeet - sur, taal, raag,
Kala chha vastun, Kala chhe vanavun,
Kala chha kavita - pad, chhand, suha,
Kala chhe harsh, kala chhe anand,
Kala chhe mohini, yatch, lol, anuraag.*

*Art is beauty personified, beauty carved in stone,
Art betokens music - sur taal and raga,
Art is like a pithy ditty sung in chorus,
Art is poetry - a couplet, a stanza, a melody,
Art is a state of ecstasy and eternal peace,
Art is charm, allurement, love and longing.*

2.

*Vaanass chhe ne manushas chhoniravaan,
sobaav chhu ne manushas handeravaan,
Marg chhu amaa yi varga valaan,
Roog chhu andri-andri sanderavaan.*

*Agree does not detract from a man's life-span,
Nor does temperament make him stale,
Only the death of near ones dashes him down,
The hidden malady hollowing his interior.*

3.

*Veshwas chhu nishchay, veshwass chha shraddha,
Veshwas chhu saahas, partet te aashaa,
Veshwas chhu saadhan, anaan sedhi, saphalta,
Veshwas chhu swyambhu, aatme gyaanich pratim.*

*Confidence is firm resolve, trust and faith,
Confidence is courage, belief and hope,
Confidence is a vehicle for achieving success,
Confidence is self-existence, an ideal for realization.*

4.

*Kamcha prath chhu maazas laha kharaan,
Mokha prath chhu karaan adijen soor,
Kudur vanun chhu be-sur, grinah gaaraan,
Shani-shani gaalaan ye pholevun noor.*

*The stroke of the whip raises wales on the flesh,
But the blow of the tongue pounds the very bones,
Harsh words are discordant and breed hatred,
Slowly eclipsing the brilliant light of love.*

5.

*Yus diyi pazich hakh, suy chhu mujaahid,
Poz chhu khodaaai, kyazi khodaaai chhu waahid.
Neke chhene raavan, neki chha poz imaan,
Yohoy myon deen mazhab, ath chhum khoda shaahid.*

*He who raises the voice of truth is a crusader,
Truth is God because God is one.
A kind deed never goes waste, kindness is true faith,
It is my religion and God bears testimony to this.*

6.

*Dayaloo man chhu akh sundar baagh,
Barus sag gandus tse pai,
Rut vetsaar chhu akh sundar byol,
Chhakh ye butaraech to karus lai:
Modhur shabd chhu akh sundar posh,
Karaan paraazyat shathras, anaan kathi vizai:
Wopkaar-krti chhe akh sundar phal,
Sethaa myuth, sethaa pooth, bina samshai.*

*Kind heart is like a delightful garden,
Water it fully and keep it duly fenced:
Good thought is like a beautiful seed,
Sow it and, surely, raise a bumper crop.
Sweet word is like a charming flower,
It disarms enemies and ensures success:
Benevolence is like a delectable fruit,
Large-sized and very delicious, indeed.*

7.

*Zindagi chha akh samai, akh avsar te akh kaal,
Zindagi chhu heachun te heachit vartaavun, ama kathin sawaal,
Zindagi chhe tsu-vot, du-tsyot te suma-soth,
Yohuy parzanaavun, parkhaavun, ratun, traavun mahaal.*

*Life is time - an age full of opportunities,
To imbibe good and to do good is difficult task,
Life is a crossroads, a deceptive path, an embankment,
To identify, test, accept or reject these is hard.*

8.

*Aatmaa anubhav chhu divaan diva gyaan,
Avay aatma gyaanik chhi saari anugraagi:
Aatma gyaan chhu mukhti hund nishaan,
Su aastan yogi, bhogi, raagi yaa tyaaagi.*

*Self-realization results in recognition of God,
That is why the wise strive to know themselves:*

*Self-knowledge is the symbol of salvation for all,
Be it a Yogi, sensualist, lover or anchorite.*

9.

*Gaatlev chhu vonamut har kanh chhu anzaan,
Saari na nipun, saariney na pahchaan,
Itihaas chhu zyooth, prasang chhi anek,
Prath kaansi sankooch, be-had chhu kreshaan.*

*The wise have said that everybody is ignorant,
All are not experts, all are not seers,
The agenda is quite long, topics are numerous,
All suffer from constraints but they long to learn.*

10.

*Dayi naav swarun, su manas darun,
Suy zevi parun, gayi saez sumran,
Gwar dhaarun, tas nishi anubhav yaarun,
Suy Ishwar mangal - amar, ajar, sanatan.*

*Remembering God, enshrining Him in the heart,
And reciting His name is the unaffected rosary:
A guru is necessary for gaining spiritual bliss,
Which is immortal, imperishable and timeless.*

11.

*Gaash aasi te asi prakash meli
Dimou tsyat asi te vopdi yehsaas,
Qasma-qasam kath chham hanga te manga,
Karau pachh kaensi diya su veshwas.*

*Only if we are lettered can we attain knowledge,
Only by delving deep can we realise our duty:
Why should we take recourse to oaths for nothing?
If we put faith in someone, he will not fail us.*

12.

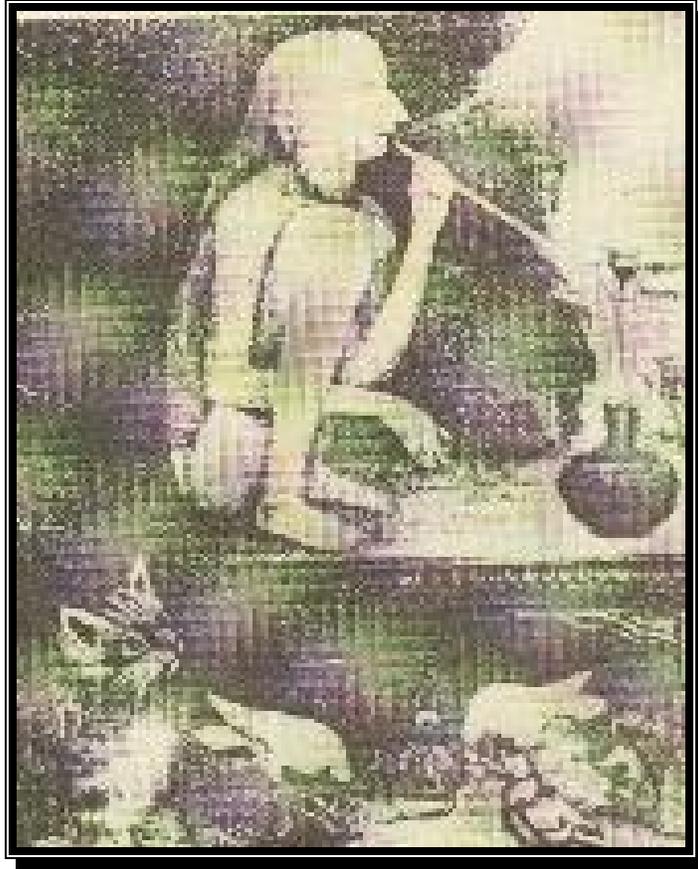
*Mewa chhu aasan setha chok papna bronth,
Mantar chhu baasaan neshphal zapna bronth;
Shur chhu karaan gaangal kehn dapna bronth,
Bekal chhu rozaan nam-tal gaatul sapna bronth*

*Fruit is quite bitter before it ripens,
Mantra seems ineffective before it is recited;
A child poses problems before it learns to speak,
A fool remains subjugated until he grows wise.*

Source: Koshur Samachar

13.0 SWAMI JEEWAN SHAH

"Agar Humki Khuda Naist - Ba Hukam Jeewan Shah"



Swami Jeewan Shah

Jeewan Shah, an outstanding Saint of the 18th Century was born in Motiyar Mohalla of Rainawari Srinagar (Kashmir). A highly evolved Saint with tremendous spiritual power, his miracles are legion. His father Raj Kak Pandit was a man of means. Raj Kak's wife used to go to "Khirbhavani Shrine" at Tulamula once every month literally in sack cloth and ashes and pray before the Divine Mother "Shri Rajna Bhagawati" for the boon of a child. Visiting the shrine for a prolonged period, she earned Devi's grace one day and fell into a trance and beheld the Goddess giving her two boughs, one of pomegranate tree and the other of grape vine. The Divine Mother also told her she would get two sons, one of them would belong to them i.e. the worldly parents and the second son would be Her incarnation. The first child was given the name of Hari Ram and the second called Jeewan Shah. Jeewan Shah blossomed into a young boy exuding "Ojus and Tej". He received his early education in a local school. He was well versed in Persian which was the Court language during that period.

He was married in his teens much against his will. Early marriages in those days were common and what was worse was that the bride and the bride- groom had little say in the matter. Jeewan Shah soon after his marriage, however, renounced the world confining himself for about 60 years to a room with a bare rectangular wooden plank as its furniture. He carried on his Sadhana, sitting there in "Kag Asan" (Crow posture). This plank stands as a living testimony to

his austere life. During his lifetime in the whole of Rainawari whoever solemnized a marriage, first Thali of the marriage feast (cooked rice, vegetables etc.) would be offered to Jeewan Shah. He would accept the offering, invariably place the Thali on a windows sill and distribute the contents by bits even when it was stale. It is common knowledge that those who received Jeewan Shah's blessings in this manner benefited immensely.

Some of Jeewan Shah's miracles which are indelibly impressed on people's memory are narrated below:

(1) During the year 1783 AD, the valley was governed by a cruel Pathan Governor Azad-Khan. He tyrannized Hindus greatly. On one occasion a group of Pathan soldiers while marching through Misha Mohalla (Rainawari), abducted a Hindu girl, forced her into their boat and rowed away. Since her parents and their sympathisers could not fight the Pathan Governor and his soldiers, they appealed to Jeewan Shah for help. He was visibly moved and within the hearing of all those present, summed up his sentiments in a Persian couplet thus -

**AGAR HUKMI KHUDA NAIST,
BA HUKAM JEEWAN SHAH!
KISHTI GARKI AAB KHUD,
HINDVA AZAAB BALA SHUD!!**

"If it is not the God's command, by my (Jeewan Shah's) own command then the boat should capsize drowning all except the Hindu girl".

The boat capsized and the Pathan soldiers got drowned, only the Hindu girl landed ashore safely.

(2) During the life-time of Swami Ji, a very severe drought affected the valley. Cattle and other animals were dying of starvation, people suffered from disease and death. The Gujjars approached Swami Ji in humble supplication to redeem their lot. Swami Ji uttered a Persian couplet and a few minutes afterwards, there was a heavy downpour, changing the dry parched lands into luxuriant green pastures.

(3) Dila Ram Pandit, a very poor man barely literate, was a devotee of Swami Ji. One day he approached Swami Ji for granting him some means of sustenance. Swami Ji told him to eat the stale cooked rice lying in a brick Taku (plate). Dila Ram managed to swallow a few morsels, with great difficulty as it was stinking. Swami Ji egged him on to take more of it mixed with curd. He could barely take a few more morsels but could not finish it. Swami Ji next told him "You unlucky man, tell me whether you would like to be Governor or his brother-in-law." Dila Ram was cut to the quick as he could not aspire to any of the positions, as he was barely literate and he had no sister to marry to qualify to be any one's brother-in-law. Swami Ji had thought differently. He meant whether he would like to be an administrator or serve the latter as his Dewan. Swami Ji, however, directed him to get going and take his 'Qalamdan' (Ink and pen stand) and paper to Gata Kadal (Dul Gate) where the Governor was camping. As soon as Dila Ram reached the place, the Governor noticed him and called him in. At that time his Dewan, Tarq Ali Khan was reading a missive from Shahan Shah Delhi castigating the Governor for his lapses and commanding him (Governor) to become a Dog (Sag Shavi). The Governor was annoyed and directed Dila Ram to re-read the latter. Dila Ram read the letter. Dila Ram read "Sag Shavam (I become a dog) for "Sag Shavi". The Governor enquired of him as to why he read the word like that. Dila Ram replied that he could not tolerate such an insult to the Governor. The Governor was apparently pleased at his reply. He dismissed Dewan Tarq Ali Khan, who was also his brother-in-law and appointed Dila Ram as his Dewan.

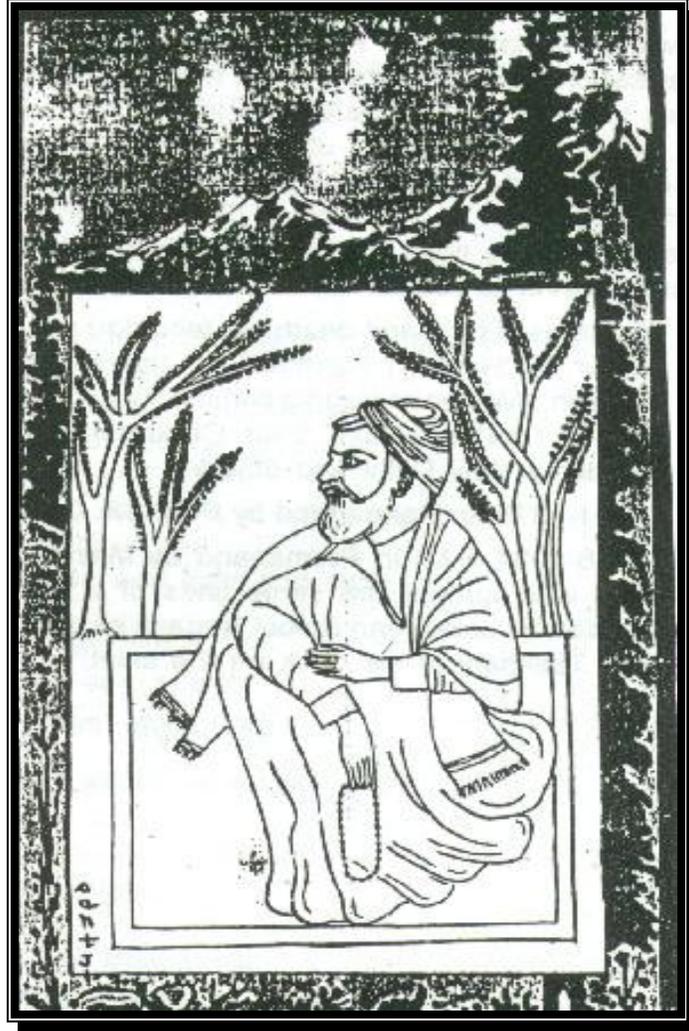
After some time the Governor got angry with Dila Ram and ordered that he should be thrown into the river. He went to Swami Ji to bid him farewell. Swami Ji told him not to worry. Dila Ram

was thrown into the river but managed to reach the other bank safely. When this came to Governor's notice, he reinstated Dila Ram and asked to be ushered into the presence of Swami Ji. As soon as the Governor reached Swami Ji's room in his Ashram, he was frightened out of his wits to see a lion there. He barely mustered courage to salute Swami Ji from a distance and bolted away. Swami Ji commented on this episode thus - "what business have such- cruel Governors, to come here". This experience had a sobering effect on the Governor who became more humane and considerate to his people thereafter.

(4) One Krishna Koul Kotwal was a devotee of Swami Ji. He was asked to eat the stale cooked rice. He obeyed and took a few morsels with great difficulty. Soon afterwards he was appointed a Police Officer. A culprit accused of murder escaped from his custody and the Governor ordered that Krishna Koul should be thrown into a "Siya Chah" (a deep dark pond). He narrated his woeful tale to Swami Ji who advised him to arrange a "Band Jeshan" (a musical concert). The culprit, he told him, would also come there and if he could recognize him he should apprehend him. Exactly the same thing happened. Swami Ji's ashram is visited by large throngs of people daily.

Source: **Koshur Samachar**

14.0 SWAMI PARMANAND



Swami Parmanand
Parmanand (1791-1879)

Philosopher Poet of Kashmir

**My thanks and gratitude are due to Sh. M. L. Kaul,
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portrait published in the souvenir of MILCHAR of 1973**

14.1 Parmanand and his 'Krishna Leela - "Contentment leads to perennial joy"

Moti Lal Khar

The cultural life of Kashmir has had the impress of great mystics. Often we witness a happy blending of poetry and mysticism in it. Among these mystics a prominent place goes to Parmanand, the great saint-poet of southern Kashmir.

Pandit Nand Ram, Parmanand being his penname, was born in 1791 A.D. in Seer Village near Mattan (Martand), one of the famous holy places of India. Both his father, Krishna Pandit, and his mother, Saraswati Devi, were of religious bent of mind. Child Nand Ram got his education in Persian, the court language of Kashmir those days, in his own village. He also learned Sanskrit from Sadhus who used to visit and stay at Martand temple. Nand Ram was a precocious child and his teachers and schoolmates were greatly impressed by his sincere devotion and inborn knowledge about spiritual matters. He attained mastery over Persian and wrote verses in that language under the pen-name "Gareeb".

14.1.1 Early Life

After his schooling, Parmanand was married to Mal Ded, a girl from his own village. She was an ill-tempered lady, yet the tolerant nature of the saint took it in its stride. His father was a Patwari in Mattan village and after his death Nand Ram was offered his father's post. A Patwari was looked down upon by people in those days. Parmanand had no aptitude for this post, but compelled by circumstances he had to accept it in order to sustain himself and his family.

14.1.2 Meditation

Parmanand was greatly influenced by the scenic beauty of his village and its surroundings. He would be found sitting under a tree absorbed in deep meditation. He would compose verses in Kashmiri there and then. Unlike other Patwaris of his time he never accepted bribes. On the contrary, he would at times pay land revenue from his own pocket on behalf of poor peasants. Being bold and frank, Parmanand made sarcastic remarks in his verses about the then despotic rule even at great risk. He was put to severe hardship by his officers to whom he would never bow or flatter. But by God's grace he escaped dismissal or incarceration. Like Guru Nanak Dev, Parmanand spent all he had to feed Sadhus to the great distress and chagrin of his wife. Parmanand's poor wife often rebuked him for not caring for his family.

Seeing this non-attachment to the things of the world even at a young age, people living in the locality came to realise that Parmanand was born to fulfill a definite purpose and held him in high esteem. After he left his job, devotees would arrange for the maintenance of his family. Especially his Muslim neighbour, Salah Ganai, the headman of the village, stood by him through thick and thin, knowing the worth and merit of Parmanand.

The devotional songs of Parmanand are on the lips of all Kashmiris. His poetic collections are available in both Devanagari and Persian scripts. Master Zinda Kaul, the famous poet of Kashmir, who edited the poetic collections of Parmanand was very much influenced by his poetry. Pandit Narayan Kaul, and his beloved disciple-poet, Pandit Laxman Bhat of village Nagam, also have edited some of his collections. Parmanand was an eloquent and a gifted poet endowed with a forceful style. His devotional songs and hymns in praise of Lord Krishna are to this day on the lips of every Kashmiri. His Sudhama character is regarded as one of its best Kashmiri renderings. His spiritual hymns and Leelas are recited in temples and on marriage ceremonies or on festivals such as Janamashtami or Shivratri. His style is direct and effective.

14.1.3 Philosophy

Parmanand's philosophy is best depicted in Karam Bhoomika where he says that the highest good is only attainable when the self is subdued and that perennial joy is the reward obtained by the mastery of one's own self. To overcome one's own self, according to him, is to wage the toughest war in the battlefield of life and to subdue one's own self is the noblest of all victories.

Religion for Paramanand was not mere ritual and formal worship but something far more fundamental and a matter deeply connected with the soul. In the poem, Amarnath Yatra, he describes the different paths and stages an aspirant has to pass in spiritual Sadhna or practice. Most of his poems are allegorical. His poem, Radha Suamber, is his masterpiece and is regarded as one of the most precious contributions to devotional literature. To read Paramanand or listen to his Leelas is to live through a religious experience which gives Param-Anand: eternal bliss.

14.1.4 Fascinating

Parmanand's poetry testifies to a fascinating kinship between mystics all over India. His writings provide convincing proof of the universality of the concept that Truth is one, though sages call it by different names. In his famous poem, Shiv-Lugan, Paramanand propounds the unity of the One and the many. The infinite and the finite are absolutely identical, according to him. In another poem, The Scenes of the Tree and its Shade, he says that God is attained by merging the finite with the infinite. He asserts that by getting freedom from our worldly fetters we can attain salvation.

Parmanand was loved and adored by Hindus and Muslims alike. Salah Ganai gave him succour in his old age, when Parmanand's kith and kin had died before him, leaving him all alone. He had no son or daughter of his own. At about 90, this great mystic poet died in 1879 A.D. Pandit Laxman Bhat wrote his death date in his elegy in which he lamented, "The singing nightingale of the garden became silent making the garden desolate".

Source: Koshur Samachar

14.2 Parmanand - (1791-1879)

Prof. P. N. Pushp

Parmanand rose to enviable eminence not only as a saint, but also as a poet articulating spiritual insights. Born in the family of a village Patwari he was named Nanda or Nanda Ram, and his persistent endeavour transformed him into Parmanand (*Parma Ananda*, i.e. *Supreme Bliss*) His father, Krishna Pandit, belonged to the village Seer, about three kilometers away from Mattan where he was working as Patwari. His mother, Saraswati, was a pious lady thoroughly conversant with the spiritual heritage of the community, despite her illiteracy.

Parmanand received his formal 'schooling' in a Maktab where he was given a smattering of rudimentary Sanskrit with a working knowledge of the Persian courses deemed essential for a prospective patwari. Persian was, those days, not only the language of administration but also the language of cultural transmission of even the Sanskritic lore, including religion and philosophy, astrology and ritualistic tracts. Parmanand availed of this traditional facility too as is obvious from the copy of the (Persian) Upanikhat left by him. Yet, it was the live contact of Nand Ram with the saints and spiritual aspirants at Mattan and around that deepened his longing for self-realization notwithstanding the demands of his profession, and the resentment of his ambitious wife Maalded. She was the daughter of a successful patwari and naturally expected her husband to make hay while the sun shone.

Parmanand braved the stress and strain of the times, and persisted in his Sadhana under competent guidance of a genuine Paramahamsas. His admirers like Saleh Ganai, the Zailder of Mattan, looked after his material needs and provided him a congenial atmosphere for spiritual preoccupation, so that he could articulate his aspiration as well as realization. In his utterance we therefore, find the unfolding of a variety of spiritual layers. During the Amarnath pilgrimage days he had witnessed the multidimensional manifestation of spiritual quest at Mattan and had realized the need to "proceed from the (external) cave to the personal cave (within)' and to face the selfless Self, meditate on the Sahaja (In boro Truth)." The interplay of the individual Soul and the Cosmic Soul was for him a Leelaa (sport of the Spirit) which he presented variously in his verse, particularly in his three Leelaa poems, Shiva-Lagan (Siva's Wedding), Raadaa-Svayamvar (Radha's Choice of Her Own Man) and Sodaam-Tsareth (Sudama's Story).

The allegorical nuance has all through remained unobtrusive yet significant, within the convincing depiction of personal and interpersonal contours of social behaviour such as: parental solicitude to see the daughter suitably married away, and the girl's ambition to secure the boy of her own choice Parmanand has thus achieved remarkable success weaving the Pauranic legends into contemporary realities of pervasive import artlessly harmonized with the allegorical significance, such as in the following rendering:

***"Gokul is my heart wherein thrives the pasture of your kine;
O Lord, shining in consciousness !
Mindways are the Gopi's running reckless after you;
maddened by the call of Krishna's flute,
Losing sentience and feeling, forgetting self and non-self...."***

Parmanand's Raasleelaa (in his Raadaa Svayamvar) symbolizes the universal dance of cosmic consciousness, integrating the secular with the spiritual:

***"Wandering all around they find him at no point,
they hear from far away the flute alone.
None plays there with anyone else,
none but Krishna there; Krishna alone, cowherd lads and lasses,
men, women, none is there who is not He
.... Trees and plants and stones with eyes agape unravel secrets of the inner depth."***

The Shiva-Lagan, similarly signifies the union of Shiva and Shakti at both the immanent and the transcendental levels; while the Sodaam-Tsarete reflects the unshakable ties between the Oversoul and the individual soul, in the ideal friendship of Krishna and Sudama. Similar concern with the essential rather than the ephemeral reverberates in the smaller poems of Parmananda, and quite a number of them sound as spiritual rhapsodies over-flowing with spontaneous lyricism. He left the Kashmiri language positively richer than he had found it.

Source: Koshur Samachar

14.3 Swami Parmanand and his Poetry

The Famous Saint poet and Philosopher of Kashmir

P. N. Razdan (Mahanori)

With the mystic sayings of LAL DED based on her Yogic experiences and the didactic ones of NUND RESHI begins the history of Kashmiri literature through one Shieti Kantha's book "Mahanaya Prakash" existed a couple of centuries or two before.

Whereas LALLA remains unparalleled up to date in her mystic sayings, yogic practices and depth of thought in the whole field of Kashmiri literature, NUND RESHI and PARMANAND are the

undisputed topmost Rishis of the Religious philosophical thoughts of their respective cults. All the three are held in high esteem by the Hindus and the Muslims alike in Kashmir for their unity of purpose and divinity of nature.

PARAMANANDA is said to have been served and generously financed by one Salih Ganai, the village Moqdam (Nambardar) after the former resigned his post of the Village Patwari.

Born of Saraswati Devi, (goddess of eloquence and Wisdom also is called by the same name) wife of Krishna Pandith (Svamina Bharadvaja) in 1791, in the village SEER near Mattan, he was brought up in that rustic atmosphere and educated in Persian up to the elementary stage according to the prevalent custom. In spite of this handicap, however, he wrote Poetry in Persian early in life under the poetic title of GARIB. During his tenure of office as the Village Patwari of Mattan, his father had transcribed a big MS of MAHABARATA into Persian which is said to be well preserved up to date.

From a portrait of his, drawn by one of his disciples Narayan Muratgar, it seems that, at the age of three score years and ten, he still enjoyed robust health and wore gray hair above his broad forehead and a long nose on his ruddily face between two bright eyes. His large head appears to be sitting on his broad shouldered trunk over a thick neck

Parmanand of Seer Village really became a tender hearted saint-poet and rose to be a Seer of Wisdom with satire and humour. Married to his elder, childhood -playmate, Malded early in boyhood, his wife, being harsh, was a contrast to his poetico-philosophical genius. She continued to Lord over him throughout his life.

His father died and he succeeded him as the village patwari of Mattan at the age of twenty five years. It is here at Mattan that Parmanand must have read his father's transcription of Mahabharata in Persian, and himself transcribed in his own beautiful hand the Persian translation of the UPNISHADS made under the supervision of Prince Dara Shikoh under the title of UPANIKHAT. It is here at this All India Tirtha of Martand that Parmanand is said to have listened to the discourses of great Sanskrit scholars on Shaivism and Vedantic Philosophy and heard stories of Bhagvata and Puranas as well sayings of LALLA and NUND RESHI. He is said to have been a regular listener to the recitation of Granth Sahib by a Sikh Sadhu at Martand. His family Guru and his (guru's) son. Pt. Atma Ram are said to have given him descriptions of KUNDALINI yoga or Shat Chakra in addition to what he had learned from his father, Krishna Pandith whom he calls his father and his guru.

***Lord Krishna is my guru,
and He is my dear father.***

***The vast universe is his body.
And He is its soul.***

Krishna Pandith is Paramanand's father and Nand that of Krishna Himself, feeling one with the Lord, he playfully and yet reverently and endearingly addresses Him and says.

***If Krishna is my father,
And Nanda that of Thine,
How are we related then
Thou can't alone decide;***

Parmanand visited some of the contemporary Muslim Faqirs like Wahab Sahib of Khrew and Sadhus like Pt. Tika Ram, a Persian writer of religious philosophy living in his neighbourhood, and one Pt. Nidhan Kak of Bijbehara. Once he is said to have remained closetted for months in his own house, with one Swami Atma Nanda, a sanyasi Parmahansa from Benares, busy in yogic practices and religious contemplation.

He was once invited by Pt. Nidan Kak to give a sitar (Madham) recital at his house at Bijbehara. The musical concert went on throughout the whole night. Most of the listeners were overpowered by sleep one after the other. The master singer rose to the heights of ecstasy and vibrated the quiet atmosphere with wave after wave of devotional songs which found him virtually merged with the Divine spirit. Nidan Kak closely followed and appreciated the music of his songs, but he too was soon found sleeping for a while. During these sweet moments of his sleep he is said to have seen RADHA and KRISHNA sitting in either arm of the sage smiling. Immediately he awoke and bowed in reverence to his honoured guest, musician and saint-friend-Parmanand. Thereafter the two became more intimate and the former often visited him, walking the whole distance of eight or nine miles from Bijbehara to Martand with offerings of humble rice cakes. The latter took these as sacred Navid and distributed small pieces of it amongst his disciples and friends alike.

Parmanand had a marvelous command over his language. He could write in a highly philosophical tone in Sanskritised Kashmiri as well as in a pure unadulterated one as and when he wanted to. There was an exuberance of apt words and thought processes at his command. And he could wield his pen on either in any manner he liked. He is said to have at once responded to the complaint of his saint friend, Wahab Sahib of Khrew about his Sanskritised language, by dictating, on the spot, a poem for him in pure Kashmiri, to his companions.

Nor was Parmanand not affected in choice of language, by his discourses with the pilgrims to Mattan. He wrote many songs and bhajans in a mixed Panjabi-Hindi language. He is also rightly regarded as the first Hindi writer of Kashmir though the saint poetess, Rupa Bhawani, had already broken the ice in this direction by making a smaller beginning much earlier.

The natural phenomena of his environmental surrounding as well as the experiences of his profession as Patwari, and village life all have had their share of impact on his character, mode of expression and his precious expositions.

The most authentic research scholar, a confirmed authority on Parmanand is Master Zinda Koul Sahib, of revered memory, who is also popularly known as Masterji. He groups Parmanand's poems into five divisions according to their sublimity of thought as follows :-

(1) Litanies to gods and goddesses in which the poet meekly pleads for mercy for his sins and lapses.

(2) Karamabhomika & Amarnath Pilgrimage containing his most numerous references to yogic practices

(3) Three longest poems of his namely.

(a) Sudama charitra depicting the mutual love of Sudama and Sri Krishna,

(b) Radha Syayamvara with the central theme of mutual love of Sri Krishna, Radha and the Gopies.

(c) Shiva Lagana culminating in the Re-union of Shiva with Uma. These three long poems symbolise the boundless love of God for the human soul and the love and aspiration of the latter towards God.

One cannot but agree with Masterji that Parmanand is at his best in expressing his unfettered flow of love with all his heart and soul to God especially in the form of Radha and Krishna LILA, Hence the name for all devotional songs as observed by Masterji.

(4) Didactic Poems laying stress on the Sadhana or preparations and purifications necessary for the attainment of Janana e.g. control of senses, quietude and concentration, Vairagya as well as Bhakti and surrender to God on the part of aspirants to spiritual life.

(5) Vedantic and philosophical poems of matured wisdom stating therein the Siddhanta or ultimate Truths of Vedanta-Aparoksha, Darshan Sahaja -Vichar, "Tar ivam asi". Anirvachaniya Maya etc.

Here, according to Masterji, Parmanand rises above external exercises and pranabhyasa- even above the sadhanas of Shama and Dama, not to speak of Dana, Tirtha-Yatra, Homa and Vedantic rituals, and these poems of his read like the meditations of a Jivanmukhta.

Herein below I venture to quote specimens from the poems of each of the five groups mentioned above with their English renderings, as my limited mental faculty in this direction understands them, by way of illustration before the article is concluded.

14.3.1 THE RELEVANT QUOTATION

*Thou blessed mother of the universe.
Shed thou Thine haloed light on us.
And merge our finite into Thine infinite
For, are we not sparks of Thy light?*

*Reinforce thy field of action with
The spirit of duty and devotion,
The seeds of contentment will then grow
And bear the fruits of external bliss.
Harness the oxen of Twin-breath
To plough the field day and night.
Lash them on to work hard
With the Kumbaka whip;
Arise awake and work, on to see.
That not a patch remains unploughed.
Sow thou the seeds of contentment
To grow the Crops of bliss!*

*(a) Sudama, the Jiva, friend of the Lord arrived
Thither went God Sudharshan to receive him
And Sudama, the Jiva resigned himself to His care!*

*(b) Rukhmini takes, Radha to her Palatial home
And Lord Krishna, Sudama, the Jiva to His!*

*(c) Parmanand will only relate, what is happening;
Shiva will free the Devi of her ego and pride.
And the story is long enough wherein
Sati gallantly, meekly and innocently
Consumes herself in the fire;*

*(d) Presently was heard a sound;
It was the musical flute-call of His (Lord Krishna)
Though the note came from afar,
Yet it seemed to come from near by
Allured by the musical note, the daughters
Rushed out bewitched and,
The mothers followed;*

*(e) None but the Lord (Krishna) is seen there,
He is seen alone making love with Himself,
None but he, and he alone
Is seen all around;*

*(f) The Gopies of my mental dynamics
(Flashes of my desires, aptitudes and likings)
Are absorbed in Thy thoughts and,
Maddened by the bewitching lure
Of the sweet call of Thy flute, they
Overcome the innateness of
The pulls and counter pulls
Of the senses and,
Forgetting their self and non-self, they
Run to Thee, O Lord,
Follow Thee and seek Thee and Thee alone;*

14.3.2 ABSTRACT TRUTHS REVEALED: (Vedantic and Philosophical Poems)

*(a) To die while living is a gamble,
It is to forget the-self.
And seek the Truth
It is to study
And contemplate on
The innateness
Of actions and feelings.*

*(b) Some may call it Shakti (energy)
Some Shiva.
He is born of nothing nor
Is his existence dependent on
Cause and effect;
During day, and at night, he
Is all bliss and,
All light and light and light;*

*(c) He is all above duality,
There is no
I or you or he in Him,
He is, because He is;
And all that, which
Appears real
In spite of being.
Unreal,
Also is He;*

14.3.3 THE END

Towards his last days, Parmanand contracted fever and yet sat on his seat as before. At last he directed his disciples to keep by his side on the last day of his life. He sat, as usual, in Sidhasana, uttered 'OM' and, something was seen bursting forth through his large skull and, peacefully flying off in all its glory. Thus was this great Soul taken back by the Lord to the heavens whence he had come, never to return.

1. His dates of birth and death are recorded as (1791--1885) in "Hindi in Kashmir" by the writer P.N. Razdan; With encouraging comments by Dr. Suniti Kumar Chatterjee the then Chairman Sahitya Academy New Delhi and others.

2. (1791-1879) in Parmanand by Prof. S.K. Toshkhani.

3. (1846-1934 S.M) in Parmanand by Master Zinda Koul who quotes the same lines of a poem in Persian by Lakshman Bulbul Nagami as quoted by Shri Toshkhani in his book on the saint.

Source: Gems of Kashmiri Literature and Kashmiriyat

14.4 Parmanand's Philosophy

Parmanand's Poems Translated

P. N. Razdan (Mahanori)

According to Pt. Shiv Ji Krandigami (Kashmir) in Koshur Samachar of March-April 1992 Yoga is not anything on the earth, or big-sphere. If it is anything, it is a bond between the body and the soul, as also the connecting link between the soul and the supreme Soul. Oneness, integration and kinship i.e. undistinguishable dissolution with the INFINITE.

Obstructions to the dissolutions are: Lust, desire, anger, attachment, conceit, ego and mansar. One's success in yoga subdues these obstructive enemies and brings them under one's grip and control. Thus, rising above egoistic-self and conceit, a Yogi finds his spiritual path smoothed to become one with the "TRUTH OF TOTALITY."

Swami Nand Ram Parmanand seems to have attained Param Anand (Supreme bliss). The poetic exposures of his experiences in the spiritual field depict his closest intimacy verging on oneness with the all pervading, supreme energy (PURASHA) called God and symbolized by names like Krishna Murari, Murli Manohar, Shiva Shamboo and like forms of endearing address such as expressed in:

'Slaves shine that we are, why don't thee listen?'

Though Parmanand's poems are often profusely interspersed with references to Lord Krishna, holding HIM closest to his bosom, yet he is by no means separate from Lord Shiva or Brahma, the three, apparently finite, are "Formless". Limitless and Infinite" Pt. Shiv Ji Krandigami says that Parmanand found no conflict between external life, as a social being, internal contemplation and spiritual pursuits. The two can co-exist with advantage.

C/p Vaakh Number 8. Shruk Number 4.

His statement finds corroboration in the fact that Parmanand often went into socio-religious and philosophical discussions with all India Pilgrims who frequented Mattan every year

There are also others like Pt. M.L. Koul who contend that Parmanand believed in freedom from worldly fetters to facilitate Salvation.

But one thing is certain that he was not at ease with his life- partner who, as a housewife, always pestered him to replenish his own house.

***Lord Krishna is my guru
And He is my dear father
The vast universe is his body
And He is its Soul***

Krishna Pandith is Parmanand's father and Nand that of Krishna Himself feeling one with Lord, he playfully and yet reverently and endearingly addresses Him and says.

14.4.1 AMAR NATH YATRA

Is a long multi-meaning poem, deeply mystical in nature, by implication. It is also reflective of the hurdles, a Sadakh, saint or sufi has to face in his spiritual pursuits. Besides laying stress on the absolute truth of oneness of the Supreme Energy, he says that this unlimited oneness assumes finite forms under different nomenclatures in different countries and climes whereas one is representative of the other. Amarnath Yatra or Kailash perceptible or the imperceptible

objects are ultimately one and the same Supreme Energy. Comparing the Amar Nath cave with the hollows inside the human body, he associates the stages of the actual yatra (pilgrimage) with the traditional stages of Kundalini from Muladhara to Sahasrara at the crown of the head. And so, he suggests going within from without in Sadhana in consonance with his two predecessors, Lal Ded and Nund Reshi

*Muttering the Mantar; "Shiva, Shamboo"
Meditate on the Lord with a calm mind;
Inside the cave of human body, lies
The truth' contemplation and
The lingam of eternal bliss;
On the throne of my heart,
He sat calm and composed;
What if, people may say that
We slept atop KAILASH there?*

14.4.2 SHIV LAGAN

Affirming the universality of the ultimate Truth of Totality in this popular, thought provoking poem Parmanand corroborates the concept of oneness of all that is finite, with the infinite as propounded by Lal Ded.

14.4.3 RADHA SWYAMVARA

Is an excellent specimen of devotional, literature of all times and climes, as far as my impression be faithful to me after having read the poem in the early forties half a century ago. Neither the book nor the poem is available here at Jammu presently

Jubilant outburst on the birth of Lord Krishan;

*The gloom of darkness has vanished on thy birth
Long live Devkinandna jai,
Jai Jai Devkinandna,*

Tributes to Pamma Sadha Shiva:

*In blissful bloom's Parma Sadha Shiva
Truth, contemplation, bliss
And currents of science.*

Invoking his Guru:

*Reveal to me too, thy knowledge, my Guru, and Make me drink the Amrit
With the light of thy Gyan, O. my Satguru.
(Practical experience).*

14.4.4 TRINITY ASPECT

Despite all this single minded devotion to Lord Krishna, however, Parmanand does not ignore the Trinity aspect of the Almighty as per the Hindu tradition as elsewhere. To conclude, he sees the three; Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva in one, Parma-Shiv. His Kashmiri poems, replete with absorbing reflections of divine sentiments and devotion, pin-pointed his philosophy which gives him an unique place of pride in Bhakti and Philosophical literature all over the country.

14.4.5 Closetted with an Indian Non-Kashmiri Saint:

Once a pilgrim-saint, visiting Mattan spring, accompanied Parmanand to his home. Both remained closetted there inside a close room for a couple of months or so. The two remained busy in Sadhna without disturbance of any sort whatsoever.

After the tryst of deep meditation (Yoga) the two emerged out completely changed, looking younger and robust as if by 'Kaya Kalap'. This reminds one of 'Kaya Kalap' of Pt. Madan Mohan Malviya, in the thirties of this century. Despite his cutting short the prescribed period, he looked twenty years younger after emerging from the ordeal, for the better.

14.4.6 I. GOKUL IS MY HEART

Introductory to the Poem:

Parmananda is essentially a devotee of Lord Krishna despite his deep interest and devotion to the Trinity aspect of Godhood:

Brahma, the Creator

Vishnu, the Preserver and

Maheshwar, the Destroyer

who on ultimate analysis dissolve into the single, ONENESS-concept of God

The Poem, "GOKUL'S HREDAY MEON" (Caption mine) is a mirror of Parmanand's devotion to LORD KRISHNA;

(a) Lord Krishna's Gopies are Parmanand's nervous system and the nerves, both sensory and motor nerves, arising from it. They govern his five senses of touch, taste, smell, hearing and sight. He finds them magnetically attached to and dancing, like gopies around the musical FLUTIST LORD.

(b) The sensations of fever, pain and hunger etc. keep hinged to and moving about Girdhar Gopal.

(c) His instincts, innate feelings and emotions like love and hatred, grief and joy, happiness and sorrow, anger, pugnacity and wrath, are intently focussed on his COW BOY.

(d) His logic and philosophy, reasoning and judgment, intelligence and wit, fair-play and justice, pity and compassion revolve about the central axis of Krishana Murari.

Thus is Parmanand's very being deeply absorbed and ever remains a constant participant in the struggle that goes on within, illuminated by the Divine light as Lord Krishna guides Arjun in the 18-day Mahabharata war between Pandavas, and Kaurvas at Kurukshetra.

The Poem "GOKUL IS MY HEART" is replete with vivid reflections of observations made here. Our sensory nerves and sensations are as mobile and frisky as Gopies like, will-of-the-wisp.

Gukul's My Heart, There's.....

14.4.7 GOKUL HREDAY MEON

*1. Gokul is my heart where
here's thy milk shop.
Recollect and contemplate I
The lure of thy flute,
And the haloed Light,
O, Lord, my God;*

*My senses are thy Gopies, who
Run after thee: -
Mad after the sweet call
Of thy flute-tunes;
Unconscious of strangers
And the self,
Dead are their nerves !*

*2. Hand in glove with thee, they
Dance in the dancing ring
Where Vyas and
Narad, too, are present
In obeisance;
Where Radha, in submission
Is telling the beads
"Radha Krishna Radha Krishna";
Gods and Goddesses also keep
In attendance there
Waiting and pining
To meet- THEE....;
Weeping and singing,
They tire not !*

*2. Flowers take colour and bloom
At the sight of thee, and,
Wear a smiling face, as thee !
Soothed and solaced, as they feel
In the magnetism of thy
Presence;
Garlands would we thread
For thee and, shower thy path
With colourful petals !*

*3. Omnipresent that
Thou art indeed, and yet,
Separate art not thee from
Mundane life;
Though thy Maya, shadows us out
From Thee !*

or

*In love for thee, I see you
Everywhere and yet,
Separate aren't thee
From Mudane life;
In elusive Maya, thou seem to be
Out shadowed from us;
C/P L.V. No. One, N. Shruk No. One.*

*7. In thy illusive void
And unlimited existence
Thou looketh like the starry dome
That serene light:
The sublime Vision!
Thou god of gods, and
Life of the living!*

6. *As one conceiveth, so one
Seeth thee.*

*Pray grace me too
With thy Darshan, O, Narayana !
Too impatient am !
To wait any more!*

7. *"As one wisheth, so one geteth
The fruit of Karma."
Sayth thee, O. Lord,
The giver of all !
All, "give and take", is
Thy own Maya, and yet,
Why is man jealous of man?*

8. *The wise forgive the unwise and,
Suffer no loss for it!
O, yee unwise, realise that
Right action is more precious than
Empty prayer!*

9. *Could I? i would proclaim
The truth but,
None being receptive'
Whom should I reveal
My heart?
Singular truth seeps only
Into deep, sober minds!*

10. *Does a sun-and-moonless earth
Sparkle?
Or would a godless soul halved be?
A godless life is no life:
Garlands would I offer HIM
Without fail,
Would that He were ever
To remain before me !*

11. *Slaves shine as we are,
Why do not thee
Accept our plea?
Shouldst thou treat shine own
As strangers?
Aren't we suppliants at thy feet,
Seeking Compassion ?*

12. *Dumb of tongue, how can I speak?
How does one understand
The depth of feeling of another?
One, who realises the truth,
Why's he unable to reveal it
To others?*

13. *Even on bitter weeping,
Too atrophied's my tongue
To utter a cry !
Friendly He's not as
Elusive He is*

*Injured is my liver and
The wounds don't heal!*

*14. In search of HIM, I go
From country to country, but
Not a trace of HIM, I find anywhere.
I wait and wait, yet
He doesn't oblige !
Too weary are my feet:
I weep and weep.....and,
My tears fill pails deep !*

*15. Greatly complex is god's Maya.
Too many embark on fathoming
The mystery, but
Realising the truth once.
They lose the thread,
Time and again, time and again!*

*16. Wary aren't we in varied play,
I would pray to Thee, O, Narayan!
All too suddenly
Be consistently in play with me:*

*17.O, Krishna, Thou seeth us sin,
Pray wash off our sins,
Unwise that we are:
Be merciful now that
We acknowledge our lapses!
..... strain.*

*18. None comprehendth, Bhagwath Mazda
To everyone
It is like the one.
As one conceiveth it
To be!
Unmindful of egoistic self and,
Regardless of "You and I"
Come let us accept it
s we conceive it*

*19 He, who isn't born of anyone,
And, of whom none is born,
Whom the living precisely know is such:
One, who knows, contemplates
And yet,
Few know him thus !*

*20. A mere figment of imagination too
He is not . for,
With four VEDAS, He
Reaches where ever necessary,
And with his thousand tongues,
Even Sheshnag also is
Dumbfounded!*

*21. To one, He grants to the extent
Of one's devotion and desire
.....*

.....
I surrender to Thee, that Thou art my own !

*22. Leaving behind all their wealth,
They die.*

*Blessed are those who have none:
Pray I to Thee,
O, Lord, my God,
For contentment and,
That Il be millions and billions
For me!*

*23. Let my mind be dyed in composure
And that 'Il be my wealth and pelf.
Quench my search for Truth
And, Divine knowledge:
Always to find Thee
In my company !*

*24. Magnanimously, the Lord
Was heard saying:
"All the virtuous suppliants
Whose hearts bubble with
The love of right action.
Are ferried across great spans
By the Ferryman !
Of His Own !*

*25. No one, awake and
God- conscious,
Is without Him:
He is the speaker and,
The listener, all by Himself !
He is the force behind
Every action and,
Every action is
His doing !*

*26. Sweet as honey, in speech
We approach Thee,
With love and affection:
For identification !
Ever thinking of and concerned,
Are we about Him as,
He is we and
We are He !*

*27. Parmanand is blessed with
The bliss of Param Anand (Supreme bliss)
As, smeared is he and his
Every nerve with
Lord Shiva's balm of ashes !
For:
RADHA is his mother and
Lord KRISHNA,
His Father !*

14.4.8 II. GOPIES, LIKE, FAIRIES DANCE

1. *Let us form a ring*
2. *Flowers would we offer In prayer: Trust we not The strangers!*
3. *Jostled with Him in dance*
4. *Pearls for tears, They shed ! In measured steps and, rhythmic movement*
5. *Receptive mind's and shaky feet, He may Stabalize !*
6. *Bewitched by the bright lamp The butterfly O, When'll we be mad after The madman (The Lord!)*
7. *Bare-footed in woods in blazing heat and Blistered over-----Hot roads*
8. *How hard is to Speak the Truth (This much) revelation Even after self -realisation The desire to probe, What else is said", Still persists!*

And dance like Fairies bright

Lord Krishana to awaken From Slumber! And dance like Fairies bright.

Solaced and soothed is He And dance like Fairies bright!

Piles of emeralds they build!

May we dance like Fairies bright.

Induce compassion in Krishna, It may! And dance like Fairies bright

Dances around and Gives its life in the dance!

And merge like it with Him.

In the ecstasy of the dance Around Him! Weary and Exhausted'ld those Krishna Bhakhta become May we dance like Fairies bright! Who has's been blessed with The Parma Ananda?

And dance like Fairies bright!

14.4.9 III. REVEAL TO ME THY.....

1. *O, Keshav, may thee not
Put me to shame, now that
I'm already grey haired!
Pray reveal to me,
Thy godly grace !*
2. *Waning is my youth
Prompt me on to the right path
Otherwise, helpless, I might be
Misled !
Pray, hold my hand in old age
Lest I should go astray
Reveal to me, Thy godly grace !*
3. *Too distant yet, seems to be
My goal Lord,
Pray, don't yee frustrate
My mission!
Was I born to
Grope in the dark?*

*If, it was so,
What use is my life?
Mayst Thee not screen me off
From bewilderment and perplexity?
Reveal to me, Thy godly grace?*

*3. Withered in my youth, don't yee
Disenchant and disillusion me!
Should I contemplate on my birth,
What have I gained in life?
Free me from shackles of evil
That might evoke public ridicule
Reveal to me, Thy godly grace!*

*4. A mountain have I to climb.
Let the day not end
Nor the sun set !,
Where'll I ascend? and
Where descend, back and forth, back and forth?
Guide and steady me
Mayst Thee lead me on thy path:
Reveal to me, Thy godly grace!*

*5. Don't yee rock me to slumber
At early dawn, nor
Waylay me in broad daylight !
Shed Thy serene light, O, Kamadeva
To dispel my evening darkness !
Reveal to me Thy godly grace!*

*7. In the name of Shri Ram,
Lead me on to destroy
Lanka the Evil, lest
It should induce in me
Sleepy negligence:
Awaken me from my Kumbakaran's
Proverbial sleep
Reveal to me Thy godly grace!*

*8. In Thine Testing Pool,
Make me wash my heart and soul,
Now that I've fully
Surrendered and pinned all my
Hopes on Thee!
Free from wavering and want,
Dejection and despair: always
To keep me company and,
Never to part for a moment !
Reveal to me Thy godly grace !*

*9. Make me not drink the intoxicating drug
Of attachment and desire.
Pat me, when I say,
"I" am Thee!
Make me weigh,
In the balance of my mind,
All that I hear!
Reveal to me Thy godly grace!*

10. *Gradually, open my bud to bloom:*
PARAM ANAND _____ *Parmanand !*
Intimate me with
The secrets of transcendental mystery !
Thou, Thyself art the People and.
The people's mouth-piece,
Don't yee single me out !
Reveal to me Thy godly grace !

14.4.10 IV. IN SEARCH OF HIM

1. *Shower on HIM' the flowers of love;*
Form a ring and dance and sing:
2. *As vigilant as Bulbul,*
With Oriole's soul,
The tree of contemplation
Has begun to bloom:
Keep on waiting,
For HIS message !
Form a ring and dance and sing !
3. *Feelingly, BUMBUR, went (drove)*
Into seclusion
Deep into the flower garden and,
Started buzzing unto HIM:
"Guon, Guon, Guon ":
Form a ring and dance and sing !
4. *Gather slowly, yee girl friends,*
One by one, to
Shower Petals of Bhakti
On HIM'.whom
They call Nand Lal !
Form a ring and dance and sing !
5. *Lured by that inner Moonlight,*
He entered within !
Amrit was born in
His graceful presence:
May He offer us too
A peg of Shyam Sundara's
Divine wine !
Form a ring and dance and sing !
6. *Enjoy the charm of Achcha Posh (a wild flower)*
Now that SPRING is come !
Bulbul is on the move
In gardens !
Leave thorny thistle:
Ego, desire and, attachment aside
Form a ring and dance and sing !
7. *He, who saw that lovely bird,*
Right in his presence,
Come with a necklace of Pearls
To adore HIM:
The VISION, unwittingly pushed off
In a moment,

*A year that passes by !
Form a ring and dance and sing !*

*8. With the gain of Practical knowledge
Make amends, and
Take care of yourself:
Concentrate on the currents of
Contemplation
Understand, if life is or
Isn't transitory! ""strain*

14.4.11 V. IF THE LORD.....

*1. Whence'll a Bhakta be gifted with
Love and Dedication, if
The Lord, in whose quest,
He has embarked, doesn't
Bless him with what he
Asks for ?
If the Lord.....*

*2. Blessed is he, who is experienced !
Devoid of sight, what use is
A lamp to the blind, in darkness?
Only he sees whom,
He Asks to open his eyes !
If the Lord.....*

*3. Wide open are the doors and windows
Of HEAVEN!
Protecting your eyes, enter
And just, dance therein !
What can he do, whose
Bloom of youth is too withered
To enjoy the fruit ?
If the Lord.....*

*4. Who's there that has understood
The ways of fate and
The decrees of God?
Who's there that has been able
To reveal the mystic secrets and,
To whom?
The winds in the rough seas
Won't ferry the boat across !
If the Lord....*

*5. Bereft of his own, is he,
Whom gods don't give:
A cringing miser accumulates,
Nor has he enough to eat!
How can cooked rice depict to him
The process of steaming food?
If the Lord.....*

*6. We destroy what we achieve ourselves
By jealousy and enmity !
Do the times deserve
Such dispensation?*

*If one gets entangled in
he maze of wrong action,
What complaint can one make
Of what hinders one's path?
If the Lord.....*

*7. Parmanand, tell us of Sudama's:
Would buds open on rotten trees,
Dry and dusty?
Pray,
Restore glow on Autumn Brown!
If the Lord.....*

14.4.12 VI. MAKHAN CHOR

*1. Light dispelled darkness
On thy birth !
Jai Jai Jai Devki Nandanai !*

*2. O. Yee smiling son of Vasudeva's,.
On gazing at Thee, again and again,
What recognition
Could he retain of Thee?
Born, and gone to Nanda goor's that
Thou were, O. Aka Nanda
Jai Jai jai*

*2. JAMUNA was anxious to touch
Thy feet in reverence,
Selflessly with love, O, Balagopal !
That's why, its waters
Rose higher and higher
Jai Jai Jai.....*

*4. Not knowing that the supreme King
Had descended to the earth,
In person, Yashodha Mata
Blamed Thee of pilfering milk:
At this, thou opened, Thine mouth
And showed her the Universe therein!
Jai Jai Jai.....*

5. Bodh Bror, the milk thief
Began to crawl, and
The milk maids from all sides,
Came running, to see Him
Break their pails, one by one:
Thuck, Thuck, Thuck !
Jai Jai Jai.....*

** (One of the notorious thieves of Kashmir who mewed, like a cat to cause deluge in their victims)*

*6. Watching and scanning Thine pranks thus,
They understood shine Omnipresence !
But, who could reveal Thy secret nature?
None but one Shukdevni could
Do so !
Jai Jai Jai.....*

**7. The Vedas expounded the Vedanta,
The ocean of compassion's ever calm
Springs of Amrit.....
Truth, Contemplation, Tranquility!
Jai Jai Jai.....**

**8. Narada, the world teacher and Swami;
Even him, the Supreme spirit too,
Penetrated into the interior of inner-self:
Loves and regards him but,
Keeps an eye on and, ever continues
Keeping him under watch !
Jai Jai Jai.....**

**8. With His varied attributes, varying ways,
Varied facets, moods and modes,
On gazing at which, again and again,
Even NARADA too was puzzled, and
Perplexed !
Jai Jai Jai.....**

10. Missing

**11. He's the earth's impressive border!
He, the beauty and fragrance of flowers,
Grandeur of gardens, sweetness of ...
Oriole notes and, musical as bulbul's
Jai Jai Jai.....**

**12. To whom even great
Yogis squalled not
In contemplation,
Wealth of knowledge, helps not in
Making friends !
Can the eyes bear the glare of
His glowing glamour
Jai Jai Jai.....**

**13. O, Yee, Gopinath of the Gopies,
Waiting I'm at Thy door,
A helpless soul !
O, Madhav, Yadavni's darling !
Jai Jai Jai.....**

**14. I know no Mantar, Tantar or Peath!
In the vast bivouac of life:
Where's the bund and,
Where the ford?
Ferry across, my boat now that
I'm telling the beads on Thy name !
Jai Jai Jai.....**

**15. Unlettered I am,
In devotion and prayers,
Nor can I recite
Sahasranama !
Sudama, with a handful of baked flour
Have I come to Thee!
Abashed and sweating, I am**

*And repentant !
Jai Jai Jai.....*

*16. Overwhelmed by a sinful life,
Far-off from celibacy that
I am, a cursed soul !
Who else other than Thee
Can do Justice with compassion
To this abject wretch, Parmanand
Who lay prostrate at thy feet-
Jai Jai Jai .:*

14.4.13 VII. KEEPING THE VOW

COMMITMENTS:

Note: Despite his ever, absorbing concentration in Sadhana, meditation and contemplations Parmanand did not differentiate between the worldly and spiritual spheres of action; much less, advocate negation of social contract as in material life.

Hence his advocacy of maintaining a balanced coordination of social, moral and spiritual life.

Notwithstanding the fact of harsh bully of a wife that may fall to one's lot, one should abide by one's marital commitments neither more nor less.

*1. Bear with the harshness of your
Destined conjugal life:
Neither more, nor less!*

*2. With the tickling of contemplation 'Il.
Ooze out" Abi-zam-zam" (Amrit) by Zekhir: (loud chanting in quick succession)
From the springs of the heart !
After Shirin did Farhad
Sacrifice his life:
Bear with the harshness of
Conjugal life,
Neither more, nor less !*

*3. Should you toil till,
The fallow land,
Teased and tossed about would you
No longer, be, for
Your past lapses:
Wait not but,
Self-till the waste lands:
Keeping your promises.
Neither more, nor less!*

*4. Harvesting, O, you grower,
Beware
Of tussle, jealousy and turmoil !
Control emotions and abstain from
Infectious enmity !
Harvesting, O, you harvester,
Cherish'd you, the joy of
Achievement! S
ick to your worn,
Neither more, nor less!*

*5. Far from malice and anger,
Pay off your dues (revenue)
In the following meadows, and
Await your calm and peace !
Walk in step and at ease,
Sure, you'll reach your goal !
Keep your balance in your promises,
Neither more, nor less!*

*6. Melting the steel of ego and conceit,
Mould it into ornamental border:
Firmly hold and, keep your calm:
Waste not a moment,
Run to master Khar.
Keep your word,
Neither more, nor less !*

*7. Had thought I, that
Wahab would appreciate
My plea and,
Give me a healing touch:
But those, whom gods love,
Are called from above !
Stand by your word,
Neither more, nor less!*

*8. What reply can I give
To the promise, I have made?
Time is slipping by and,
The Sun is about to Set!
Compassionate towards me
Would He be.....
Nor would He look to my lapses!
Keep your vow in view.
Neither more, nor less !*

*9. Clean hearted is a free soul,
But Parmanand is wanting
In faith and love:
Pray appreciate his plea and,
Grant his prayers!
Be true to your commitment,
Neither more, nor less!*

14.4.14 VIII. SOCIETY AND SPIRITUALITY

*1. O, yee, immortal soul, elusive's the world
Entitled you are to become Adi-Deva
With free ferrying across the ocean of life (Bawa Sara)
Contemplate on Truth, friend
Contemplate on Truth!*

*2. OMKAR's the first and last word,
The perennial, primeval sound:
The conscious or unconscious basic sound of meditation,
Focus attention on contemplation, friend
Focus attention on contemplation
Focus attention on contemplation.*

- 3. Before or after, it's the destiny
That shapes our ends,
"To move back or go forth" is not
Within your ken.
Kith and Kin, father and mother
Who'll endure and help you?
Think friend, think.
Do good, be good, friend
Do good!**
- 4. Dependent on others in childhood
You are, O, you unlettered:
Blind in lust in youth; and
Worried of listlessness in old age:
Be good and do good to others
Do good to others.**
- 5. Useful's audience with the wise
Thence free you are to ruminare
Over the precious words of wisdom:
Sit in meditation and you'll find Him
Ready to receive and welcome you,
And, bless you with His August Presence !**
- 6. Attachment is like a breach in the Bund
Of river Sindh, as
Sense organs, of bodily calm
Those, who have crossed the
Ocean of life, are
Autars or incarnations of the Lord !
Control the senses, and servants of yours,
They'll be !
Celebrate Dussehra, Celebrate Dussehra !**
- 7. Having found the pearly necklace
of Bhakti,
Free you are to wear it !
Who forbids you?
Who approves it?
You are all in all,
You are all in all !**
- 8. Even a grain wouldn't you get
Though brimful the stores are, and
Wide open that your watering mouth is !
Exhausting the fruits of fate,
Scared you would be
Of the turn of events that be
In the queue of grinding mill,
In the queue of grinding mill !**
- 9. Who's employed and who unengaged ?
Perplexed and puzzled, in vain, you are:
Control your mind that's
What the vedas say.
That is the key to success.
That's the way to succeed in life !**

**10. Superb green is self-renunciation.
"Shiva, Shiva" mutters itself, the cataract:
Calm, composed and selflessly, should you sit, and
Blessed you'll be to see the sight:
Tranquil, quiet Shalimar !
Tranquil. quiet Shalimar !**

**11. Subedar of the mighty city; He's
With powers of freeing you from
Lust, duty, action or meanings or
Liberation He's the Lord, He's the Lord'
Have a chat, share discussion with Him;
Share discussion with Him !**

**12. They call me Parma Anand
A social being though I am,
With the same duties and functions
As a common man.
Knowledgeable about the Devas,
He's the master of the three worlds:
All powerful! All Powerful !**

14.4.15 IX. YEARNING FOR LORD KRISHNA

People consider Parmanand as a staunch devotee of Lord Krishna. But his poems on and repeated references to Lord Krishna include Lord Shiva, the omnipresent, and to Brahma at times, make it manifestly clear that he sees, the three, in one as the ultimate TRUTH as per the Hindu doctrine. Shiva, to Parmanand, as to Lal Ded and Nund Reshi, exists in every nook and corner, compound and element as well as the smallest atom and, energy of all sorts which keep the universe going.

**1. Shri Shyam Sundara, the sweet flutist,
Ethereal, eternal flute-player!
Know not, Brahma, Vishnu, Maheshwar
Ethereal, eternal, sweet flutist!
(Lord Krishna, to Parmanand being three in one)**

**2. O, Keshav, Keshava,
Soft, feathered fan, we'll use
In Obeisance and prayers to Thee
O, Shiva, I see you everywhere or
(Shiva, the omnipresent that thou art)
Reshis found Thee not, anywhere,
O, Bishambara!
Ethereal, eternal, sweet flutist!
C/P LV. Number one, N.Sh. Number**

**3. O, thee, the source of seven seas,
Who hast ferried those that
Have landed across?
Fourteen jewels, hath thee,
Turned out to be,
O, Shridhara !
Ethereal, eternal, sweet flutist !**

**4. Taking Thee for a child among children.
We play together with Thee, all
Elegantly draped, groomed and**

*Well decorated-O, Rethendar !
Ethereal, eternal, sweet flutist !*

*5. O. Thee Shankara in reality amongst
Angelic fairies,
Fragrant garlands we have
Woven for Thee!
Gandharvas sing for Thee,
O, beauteous Lord Krishna !
Ethereal, eternal, sweet flutist !*

*6. East, West, South and North
Eager eyes gaze with anxious looks:
Our eyes swollen in the gazing
Listless, motionless and numb,
In waiting with focussed minds !
Ethereal eternal, sweet flutist !*

*7. Weeping and filling
Pools with tears,
We are:
Hearth thee not these implorings?
Light's bedimming on pillars:
Haunting pangs are deepening !
Ethereal, eternal, sweet flutist !*

*8. Tumbled down, we have, but
Stone-hearted have Thee become!
Havn't we bedecked Thy path
With our eyeballs clean?
Grace us with Thy presence before it's
Too late to save our face !
Ethereal, eternal, sweet flutist !*

*9. Cows and calves have stayed back,
With faith in Thee !
In faith, they have stayed back,
It seems !
Would that we would go
Home Along with them all !
Ethereal, eternal, sweet flutist !
C/P L.V. 23.*

*10. The biggest ocean of mercy is
OMA to us !
Aren't you the gainer, and
We, the losers?
Lord god, the grace of thy Darshan
Would satiate our Craving !
Ethereal, eternal, sweet flutist !*

*11. When the errands from Gokal
Came, saying:
Searching Him all around,
They found Him not anywhere !
"Re-searching Him again
In and outside Gokal"
They began a new !
Ethereal, eternal, sweet, flutist !*

**12. Seeking thee we go
From jungle to jungle with faith
In Thee! Grace us with Thy presence
And, we'll hold thee to our bosoms !
O, Jasudha Nandana, darling son
Of Vasudeva !
Ethereal, eternal, sweet flutist !**

**13. Parmanand speaks strangely:
Naked Thy have come, and
All Naked'ld they depart:
Parmanand'll use his own
Measuring rod to check
Something !
Ethereal, eternal, sweet flutist !**

or

**Paramanand talks in riddles:
Craving they came and,
Craving departed !
Using his own measures, will
He verify something;
Ethereal, eternal, sweet flutist !**

14.4.16 X. LOVE AND Supreme Sada Shiva

Here this poem makes it manifest that while Parmanand is so absorbed in the blissful aura of Lord Shiva, the supreme Sada Shiva, almost to the limits of trance, he urges people not to be mad after caste and creed in the quest for godliness and godhood, brotherhood and love. Nor does he ignore the scientific of observation and experiment to arrive at conclusions in the spiritual field.

**1. In a superbly beautiful pose,
Sweet as honey, is
Supreme Sada Shiva.....
Truth, consciousness, bliss
And, vibrations of science !**

**2. Thy gift of eight fold Sidhis
Verily is
Millions and trillions for those
hat have chunk Thy Amrit
Gulp by quip, O, Thee
Creator of all life !
Truth, consciousness, bliss
And, vibrations of science !**

**3. How I kubza, wish to be
Ever busy singing hymns unto Thee !
Fill Thy oceans of wisdom
Into my tiny pail !
Grant me the tongue that be
Ever vibrant in song unto Thee !
Truth, consciousness, bliss
And, vibrations of science !**

**4 Diminished has all hope and trust
Of my only Hope,**

*O, my only Hope!
I have resigned unto Thee
O, Shiva, I have pinned
All my hopes on Thee !
Truth, consciousness, bliss
And, vibrations of science !*

*5. Self with self has to meet,
Hast a play to play,
And comments to make !
Dumb-founded, we become as
Gold emerges Purified
from burning fire !
Truth, consciousness, bliss
And, vibrations of science !*

*6. With the banishment of ego,
Will vanish conceit:
Thence flows clear knowledge
That kindles the lamp of
Krishna consciousness for
Ethereal flights !
Truth, consciousness, bliss
And, vibrations of science !*

*7. Only he, who pines for Him,
Will be pined for by Him;
Only he, who desires to receive HIM
Would verily be welcomed by Him !
Yearning to see Him, in good faith
Let's await His Arrival !
Truth, consciousness, bliss
And vibrations of science !*

*8 Love only begets love,
Love alone is fondled mutually
Love, only the LOVE I Cherish
And rock in the cradle of my lap !
Truth, consciousness, bliss
And vibrations of science !*

*9. None is devoid of love,
Only love eliminates all-evil
Let's dispel darkness of the devil
With the light of Love !
Truth, consciousness, bliss
And vibrations of science !*

*10. Listen to LOVE that is sung
In Bawan ! (Mattan Spring)
Only love equals fourteen pilgrimages
To Bawan !
That sparkling love, would I
Swing in gentle breeze !
Truth, consciousness, bliss
And vibrations of science !*

*11. Love has led the world to
Merriment and boisterous dance;*

*Brimming with love are my
Blood vessels and nerves !
Would that Love would lead me to
Param Anand (Supreme Bliss)-!
Truth, consciousness, bliss
And Vibrations of science !*

*12. Parmanand, listen to
God's miraculous, mysterious ways:
Come, shed all castes and creed,
Don't be mad.
Listen to me;
Why then, this hue and cry?
Truth, consciousness and bliss
And vibrations of science !*

14.4.17 XI. O, THEE, THE CROWNED FLUTIST

*1. Puzzled ! I wonder, royal Flutist,
Thou brusheth off the strains of
Trials and tribulations of life,
O, Thee, the crowned Flutist !*

*2. Shuttling between birth, rebirth,
A dreadful, dark shadow of drabness:
How blinding dark is moonless fortnight !
Else, on the ethereal path,
What'll I reveal, what conceal ?
O, Thee, the crowned Flutist !*

*3. Crooked and dingy is the load of sin,
And loose, the sling,
On my back are twigs and the lamb, and
Eleven paths leading to the ghat ! (destiny)
Obstructive, destructive, are the senses
And, the mind wavering and weak !
What'll I reveal, what conceal?
O, Thee, the crowned Flutist !.*

*4. The sword of Death hangs
On my neck !
And, too frightened, I am
Or else, at the opportune moment,
I sit posing calm !
Opened I, the decree of Death
And, presently He changes
The decree !
What'll I reveal, what conceal;
O, Thee, the crowned Flutist?*

*5. Devalued got the pearls in
My state of distress:
The youth in bloom's robust but
The merchandise raw !
With the fading glow of youth
Ostriched gets old age !
What would I reveal, what conceal ?
O, Thee, the crowned Flutist!*

6. Missing

*7. What I sowed, grain by grain,
Will I reap ear by ear.
How devotedly would I plant (or "How I missed my aim, fumble to say !)
I fumble to say.
Grind you in the grinding Mill,
They'll
Don't you cut your lips
In repentance!
What'll I reveal, what conceal?
O, thee, the crowned Flutist!*

*8. Duds destroyed this My tree of business:
Laying a tie to foresee
My immediate future:
For sure, the tie, again and again
Turned against me
What shall I reveal, what conceal?
O, Thee, the crowned Flutist !*

*9. How deep in sweet slumber is
This household: still
You can see, how indifferent to wrath,
I have ever been....else,
Why should it have been, just
The opposite of what it was yesterday ?
What shall I reveal, what conceal ?
O, thee, the crowned Flutist !*

*10. Neither at home, nor with elders
Was I aggressive, ever;
Much less did I know,
How to complicate matters
Struck by lightning and thunder was I
By self-destructive wrath !
What shall I reveal ? what conceal ?
O, Thee, the crowned Flutist !*

*11. Ferry me across the bivouac of life, anyhow
Or else, I may drown !
Asking for different things at different times
Disgusted and dull, I've become:
Praying to Thee for all things together,
Thou too fulfill my desires in full together !
What would I reveal, what conceal ?
O, Thee, the crowned Flutist !*

*12. Parmanand, listen to and
Contemplate on Flute tunes always
Be ready with all that you possess.
The Flutist and the ash-bismirched
Still continue to be your concern.
What shall I reveal ? what conceal ?
O, Thee, the crowned Flutist !*

14.4.18 XII. GLUED TO THY DARSHAN

Parmanand and the blissful godly light are one and the same thing for him as he conveys in this poem. If ever, he tends to lose touch with this inner light of his own, he feels that self is protesting to self. He pleads for their reunion into one single entity and thus, they remain glued to each other in perfect blissful harmony.

**1. Bindraban itself has become a Paradise !
Where, in which of the woods, hast He
Chosen to stay ?**

**2. With closed fists I had
Arrived from there, but
Opened both my hands here !
Opening their hands, they repented !
Bindraban has turned into a Paradise !
Where;_____ in which woods, hast He
Chosen to stay ?**

**3. In quest of Thee
I had come here from there !
Would Mahakaal spare anyone
Whom would the hands of Death
Leave behind ?
Bindraban has turned into a Paradise !.
Where_____ in which woods hast He
Chosen to stay?**

**4. For a few days feasting I've come:
A rich place for mad merriment's
This world !
What's there to give and what to get ?
What's to be carried along ?
Bindraban has turned into a Paradise !
Where-----in which woods, hast He
Chosen to stay ?**

**5. Glistens He in the livers of the living:
Said a being from his heart:
I saw, what I was told !
Glued, to Thy darshan.
I would ever like to be !
Bindraban has turned into a Paradise !
Where, in which woods, hast He
Chosen to stay?**

**6. With the intensity of love, I would
Sacrifice myself, as a moth,
On the burning candle !
With the sickle of vairag, lead me to
Renunciation.... or else,
Arn't thee mad of mind ?
Bindraban has turned into a Paradise !
Where in which woods, hast He
Chosen to stay?**

**7. O, Thee, my very life,
Tell me,
At every, early dawn,**

*"Who ever can overcome
The angel of DEATH" ?
Does he ever sit to rest anywhere ?
Bindraban.has turned into a Paradise !
Where _____ in which woods, hast He
Chosen to stay?*

*8. Peevishly, "Parma-Ananda" has parted
In protest against himself !
Pray exhort him back home,
Chanting "SUHUM" moment by moment !
Bindraban has turned out to be a Paradise !
Where, _____ in which woods, hast He
Chosen to stay!*

14.4.19 XIII. GURU'S AMRIT

In this poem, Parmanand appeals to his Guru to equip him with full knowledge (Gyan) and, ever to be as near him as possible, to guide him with the torch of his spiritual experience.

*1. May Thee open Thy august mouth of wisdom
To make me drink the Amrit of knowledge:
My Sat Guru, take me out of
Darkness into light !*

*2. To begin with, mayst Thee make me
Contemplate on my Sat Guru !
Moment after moment, would I
Pine to kneel before Thee !
Day and night, not for a moment
Would I suffer separation from Thee
May Thee open Thy august mouth of wisdom
And make me drink the Amrit of Thy knowledge !*

*3. My Guru, solve the problems of my life
Now that I am born !
Humble me not among saints;
Subdue the thieves of
My emotive senses by
Strengthening the power of my will !
May Thee open Thy august mouth of wisdom
And make me drink the Amrit of Thy knowledge !*

*3. Subduing my emotions, break the lustful elephant
Of my pugnacious conceit
Guide me, only on one
..... of the eleven paths !
Keep me not off from
The word, SUHUM
(I m Thee).
May Thee open Thy august mouth of wisdom
And make me drink the Amrit of Thy knowledge*

*5. Make me wash myself clean
In the Sheshrum Nag lake;
Look not at my sinful life !
Ferry me too across, as Thou did
Mohini Sada Guru.*

*May Thee open Thy august mouth of wisdom
And make me drink the Amrit of Thy knowledge !*

*6. Moment by moment, let me
Meditate on Thee
Make me think of and do, only that
Which's right to think and do !
O, Kamadeva, Shyam Sundara
Let me not come and go
Come and go (Shuttle between life and death)
May Thee open Thy august mouth of wisdom
And make me drink the Amrit of Thy knowledge !*

*7. O, Bishambara, grace me with Thy presence
Stay awhile.
isten to my tale:
Revive my old memories !
May Thee open Thy august mouth of wisdom
And make me drink the Amrit of Thy knowledge !*

*8. Grace me with Thy presence in graceful garlands
And, show me Thy haloed aura, luster light !
My day has passed by, mayst Thee not
Make me wait any longer !
Mayst Thee open Thy august mouth of wisdom
And make me drink the Amrit of Thy knowledge.*

14.4.20 XIV. IN REVERENTIAL PROSTRATION

*1. At Radha's, Radika's of Sri Krishan Muraryi's feet,
Would we kneel in reverence and,
Lay prostrate !*

*2. Riding a "Garuda", Sri Krishna Maharaj
Looks like a grand, green Parrot !
Childlike smatterings of His, hear
O, Ye, Wild mynas !
In reverence, would we kneel and,
Lay prostrate at Their feet.*

*3. Sweet flute-notes would restore to us, life,
Should Krishna Murari play on His flute:
Thus'ld lighten the load of sin
On the earth !
In reverance'ld we kneel and,
Lay prostrate at Their feet.*

*4. Gathered together, Devies and Devatas, all,
Kneeling low in humility, are
Submitting their pleas before Him:
"Be compassionate to us, O, Thee, the merciful !" I
n reverence'ld we kneel and,
Lay prostrate at Their feet.*

*5. Gala guests, rajas and princes, from all sides.
Have arrived riding,
Horses, elephants and rathas:
Vimans they've bedecked
For Thee, the Rajkumaries !*

*In reverence'ld we kneel and,
Lay prostrate at Their feet.*

*6. Listening to their words in attention,
Thy hands are still in henna !
Sparkling bright that Thy pearls are,
Who hast fished them out of the sea ?
In reverence'ld we kneel and,
Lay prostrate at Their feet.*

*7. Parmanand turned gray while waiting
For Thee, for too long !
Pull him on to the Supreme Self:
Radha Krishna alone'll listen to
Every plea through every window !
In reverence'ld we kneel and,
Lay prostrate at Their feet.*

14.4.21 XV. KARAMBHOOMI

A philosophical Kashmiri Poem:

*1. Reinforce the field of action with
The spirit of duty and devotion,
The seeds of contentment will then grow
To bear the fruits of eternal bliss.
Harness the oxen of twin-breath
To plough the field day and night,
Lash them on to work hard
With the kumbaka whip
Arise, awake and work on to see
That not a patch remains unploughed.*

*2. Make use of the yoke of love
To plough the field,
With the help of a long handled block of patience
Crush thou the hard lumps of earth,
Lest any moisture of malice remains inside
Sow thou them the seeds of contentment
To grow the crops of bliss.*

*3. Smoothen thou the drains and raise their bunds
With a heedful mind,
Cut an outlet and place a blockade against
The stream of current to make water flow
Into the field with equanimity and ease,
Sow thou then, the seeds of contentment
To grow the crops of bliss.*

*4. Spring is but a passing phase
of short-lived beauty, glory and joy,
Lose thou not a moment
of this chancing phase.
Do not wait to sow the seeds of action
and work for happiness to result.
These seeds of contentment will then
Grow the crops of bliss.*

**5. Do not thou wait to work on each
of the four corners of thy field
Repair thou thy leakages all with
The wet rods of contemplation.**

**The wet rods of contemplation.
control thou shine indriyas (senses) to
Kill these rats of destruction and,
The seeds of contentment will then
Bear the crops of bliss.**

**6. With single minded labour of love the fields
Will grow refreshing green by deweeding and,
Ripen fruit with finishing-water of Tapa (meditation)
And then, the composure of mind will bring forth
Blossoms of lotus expanses.
Sow thou then the seeds of contentment and,
Reap the harvest of bliss.**

**7. Overcome thou shine own avarice and greed lest
They should gnaw away the ripened fields.
With the feelings of love and affection, keep
Ungrudging watch over them day and night
Sow thou then, the seeds of contentment
To yeild you a harvest of bliss.**

**8. And as it begins to bear fruit then,
The time for merriment is come.
Reap thou it with the sickle of renunciation (Vairag)
And put it aside in tufts to collect.
Seek thou then the help of shine kith and kin
And make it into bundles.
This then is the fruit of contentment
Growing into a harvest of bliss.**

**9. Then tie it with ropes and carry it on
To collect it in heaps;
Next call thou all shine friends, kith and kin
To carry it on with you
And when you collect it with love and devotion,
It will bring you peace, plenty and good.
Sow thou then, the seeds of contentment
To yield you a crop of bliss.**

**10. Pile up thy bundles with clear detachment
To build up one big heap;
Then will thou, unmindful of praise or blame
Attain shine nirvaana goal and,
Enter the realms of happiness true.
Sow thou then, the seeds of contentment
To grow the crops of bliss.**

**11. Beat thou ears of corn on the logs of meditation;
Separte out the grain and then,
Remove the husk to sift out
Sound grains of realization.
Doing this, weigh thou the grain
In the scales of thy pious heart.**

*Sow thou again, the seeds of contentment
To repeat a harvest of bliss.*

*12. With the hands of renunciation let
The corners be beaten aright;
Sift out and gather coarse and fine grain
Each in a separate heap.
Keep up your wits and watch lest
Thou should face thy negligence.
Sow thou then, the seed of contentment
To yield thou the fruit of bliss.*

*13. Then weigh thou shine harvest and,
Store it in separate heaps,
Collect it in 'Sohum' measures
To pay off your dues.
Lighten thou shine burden by
Carrying it to Khanabal.
Sow thou the seeds of contentment
To reap the crop of bliss.*

*14. With prayer and deep meditation
Carry it on to the ghat, P
addle on shine boat in
The calm waters of devotion.
Relieve thyself of the burden and enjoy
The refreshing breeze of Mansbal.
Sow thou the seed of contentment
To gather the crop of bliss.*

*15. Now pass on the goods to the owner
Nor should you deprive the tiller.
After all from whom will the balance be due ?
For whom should the excess be saved ?
Sow thou then, the seeds of contentment
To reap the harvest of bliss.*

*16. Sift out some good grain and
Deposit it for seed;
Sow the seed again grain by grain
When the spring comes.
This good deed will yield
Newer and ever newer fruit.
Sow thou the seed of contentment
To reap the crop of bliss.*

*17. Become thou the enjoyer of yoga
And shunt off your feelings of duality;
You are given the name 'Sadhu'
And a Sadhu you should become,
Sow thou then, the seed of contentment
To grow the crop of bliss.*

*18. Thine Guru's word will redeem thou
From the cycle of life and death;
Take thou shine past Karma as
The store of your fate (Prarabdha).
From a knowledge of Karma Kanda*

*Will spark off the lightning flash.
Sow thou then, the seed of contentment to reap the crop of bliss.*

*19. Then with the angelic light of Suhum
Thou w'lt be enlightened to be
Unmindful of the problems of
Honour or dishonour.
And thus wilt thou attain
Eternal bliss.
Sow thou the seeds of contentment
To reap the crop of bliss.*

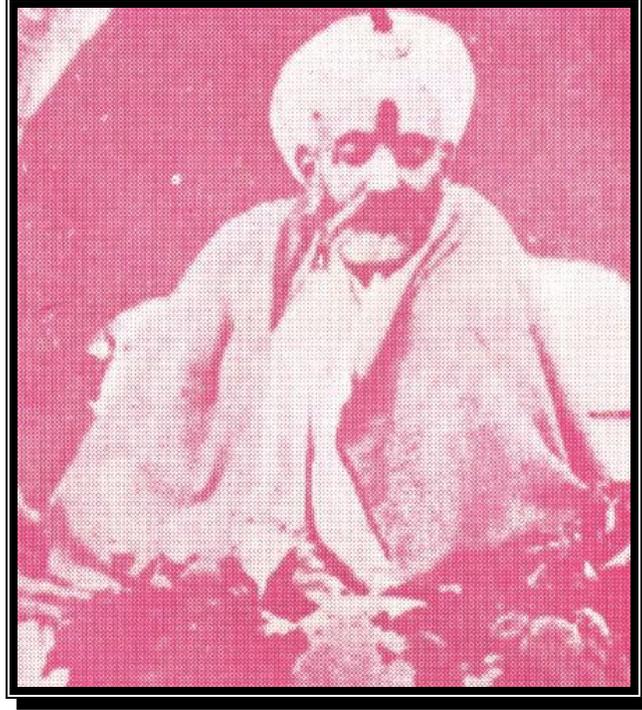
*20. Parmanand was a Zamindar.
Paying off his debts, he
Was no more subjected to insults
And reminders to pay back dues.
He was relieved of the burdens and
Anxiety of changing his rented house (freed from
The cycle of birth and death
Day in and day out)
Sow thou the seed of contentment
To yield a harvest of bliss*

Source: **Gems of Kashmiri Literature and Kashmiriyat**

15.0 SWAMI RAMJI

"Immersed in Samadhi, he never moved out for 20 long years"

Jankinath Kaul 'Kamal'



Swami Ramji

In the middle of the 19th century AD there lived a Brahmin named Shukdev at Chinkral Mohalla, Srinagar. The Brahmin was a Purohit and lived a pious life. Around 1852 AD (1910 Bikrami), a son was born to him. According to his horoscope, it was predicted at his birth that the baby would grow to be a great saint. Nobody could imagine at that time the great spiritual heights that Swami Ramji would attain in his life later.

The boy Ramji received instruction as Purohit; in those days modern education on Western lines was in its very infancy in this country. In his youth he came in contact with Shri Lala Joo Kokru, who was well-versed in Kashmir Shaivism through reflective heredity. Since Ramji also had a spiritual bent of mind, to which heredity and environment again must have contributed, he took to the study of Shaiva philosophy under Shri Lala Joo. His intelligence and interest brought to him a clear comprehension of this school of philosophy. As the adage goes, when you deserve the desire in you gets fulfilled by itself. When you really need help, it must come.

Later, Ramji met his guru, Sri Manas Ram Monga (or Maneh Kak as he was called) who was a great mystic saint of the time in Kula system of Kashmir Shaivism. He had great spiritual attainments and wanted that philosophy to spread through a line of disciples. Being a Siddha Yogi and eager to transmit the knowledge to a capable person who understood this subtle philosophy, the master found the true disciple in Ramji and transmitted Yoga to him by his divine touch.

Ramji devoted himself to the practice of Yoga in right earnest. He did not undergo the formal renunciation as a Vedantin usually does. He continued with his work of Purohit in a professional

course and regularly attended Yajman's houses for conducting worship and religious rites for quite some time of his early life.

15.1.1 Naveh Naran

Swami Ramji had a great devotee in Pandit Narayan Das Raina, a merchant and houseboat owner of Srinagar at that time. In fact, Shri Narayan Das was the first to introduce houseboats in Kashmir. Among Kashmiris he was, therefore, known as 'Naveh Naran'. He was a man of high ideals. His simple habits, loving nature and cheerful behavior had earned a name for him. Swami Ramji is said to have been his family priest. The family honored Swamiji and all his requirements were met with pleasure by Sri Narayan Das.

Swami Ramji, with his comprehensive study of Kashmir Shaivism and severe practice of Yoga, got well established in the system. Now he wanted a secluded place. He found a congenial one at a fellow-disciple's home at Safakadal. When a flower is in full bloom, it gives out fragrance. Swami Ramji was now a Siddha Yogi. Discerning people who could recognize his worth came to him. Common people too thronged round him to invoke his blessings. This disturbed the family life of his fellow-disciple. Realizing this, Swami Ramji one evening called on his admirer and worthy Yajman, Sri Narayan Das, at Fatehkadal.

"Naran Joo: I want to be in seclusion. Will you provide me with a place to -live? " he told his trusted Yajman. The noble Pandit was simply pleased to welcome the sage and offered a small three-storied house, which he owned, just 300 metres from his residence. The second storey of the small house was furnished. In a few days Swami Ramji moved to this room. Here he carried out his spiritual practice (Sadhana) and taught the Shaiva-Agama (Advaita Kashmir Shaivism popularly known as Trika philosophy) to worthy disciples like Swami Mahtab Kak, Swami Vidyadhar and Swami Govind Kaul who had been his personal devotees and received inspiration and his personal guidance to rise to their full stature in their time.

15.1.2 Scholarly Exposition

Many more devotees and admirers, mostly householders, were attracted towards him by his scholarly expositions of the Agama and Yogic wonders. He was the greatest Yogi of his time in Kashmir. His mere look or touch was bound to make a person a changed one. He wielded a wonderful Shaktipata. Even Maharaja Pratap Singh, the then ruler of Kashmir and a discerning devotee, is said to have approached him for blessings. In his later years Swami Ramji is said to have sat, with knees to his breast, at his Asana (seat) and did not move out for 20 long years. Here the saint-philosopher imparted Yogic instructions to deserving disciples and delivered discourses on Trika philosophy for hours together to his listeners who were spell-bound to see him immersed in undisturbed Samadhi.

(To enlighten his own disciples he (Swami Ramji) openly displayed, even while in body, his own Shaivahood, by remaining in Samadhi continuously for four hours daily).

Stories about his Siddhis are still current in the valley The separate house where Swami Ramji lived is now the famous Shri Rama-Trika- Shaivashrama. Devotees and admirers are heard chanting devotional hymns and recitations from Shaiv-Agamas up to this time.

15.1.3 Shaivashrama

Shri Narayan Das and his wife, Srimati Arnyamali, were greatly devoted to Swami Ramji, who from the* family priest had now evolved to be their spiritual Guru. They had been serving him and looking to all his needs and convenience with great love and devotion. On May 9, 1907

(about 1964 Bikrami), the couple was blessed with a son. When the news of the birth of this baby was instantly conveyed to Swami Ramji, it is reported that he got up to dance and uttered:

"I am Rama and the child be named Lakshmana."

(Even in his old age, Swami Ramji lost his body-consciousness out of divine joy at the auspicious birth of my Master (Shri Lakshman Joo), singing 'I am Rama and he (the new born) be named Lakshman' and danced in joy).

15.1.4 Divine Being

He believed that a divine being had taken birth in the form of the child. Truly so, the child, who was named Lakshman, showed signs of abnormality as he grew up. Swami Ramji encouraged the anxious parents and conferred blessings on this divine child. He had recognized divine features in the child who would often go into fits. Once when the parents approached Swami Ramji to express their anxiety about the child he sent them back with a remark.

".What happens to him, may be graced unto me." Thus the child, Lakshman, entered boyhood under the spiritual care of this great sage, who later initiated him into Gayatri Mantra, Pranayama and certain Yogic practices.

(There lived the renowned saint, his Holiness Swami Ramji, the Shaiva teacher of my Master - Swami Lakshman Joo).

Knowing that he would not be in the mortal coil till the divine boy attained maturity, the sage L entrusted his future initiation into the-Shaiva order to his chief disciple, Swami Mahtab Kak.

Entrusting his craving disciples and the seven- year old Shri Lakshmana to the charge of Swami Mehtab Kak, his principal disciple, he (Swami Ramji) entered the real abode of Shiva by giving up his body).

After a few years, Swami Ramji left the body in 1915 AD (1971 Bikrami Magha Krishnapaksha Chaturdashi) to merge in the Divine Universal Self of which he had been an embodiment.

15.1.5 Divine Rapture

Swami Ramji was sometimes heard by his close disciples uttering in divine rapture his experiences of Supreme-Consciousness and here is given a verse (Shloka) from his pen:

(On accepting the Truth from the mouth of the Master, whose word is the sacred text, all my ignorance got dispelled. The mind (Chitta) dived deep in the ocean of consciousness eager to taste the loving nectar of equality. The web of thought calmed down in the state of unqualified meditation. Thus the Supreme-Consciousness inexpressible is revealed to me in its perfectness.)

Source: Koshur Samachar

16.0 SWAMI SHANKAR RAZDAN

who lived for others "Face to face with the Goddess"

M. K. Raina

As the Lord, according to the Bhagvad Gita, incarnates periodically for the protection of the oppressed and the destruction of the wicked, so does He send, from time to time, his chosen ones to strengthen the wavering faith of the devotees and relieve them of their troubles and mental tribulations.

Apart from showing the right path to the Sadaka by their teachings, they set an example for the people to live a pious and a fruitful life in the service of mankind. For the relief of their devotees they go to any length. Their spiritual attainments give them control over environment and they are able to perform miracles for the relief of their devotees which seem incredulous to the uninitiated but strengthen the faith of the Sadaka. Their supernatural feats could also be intended to shock the ignorant into the realization that there is a divine force above and beyond the ken of human understanding which controls the destinies of us mortals.

16.1.1 Ultimate Truth

Kashmir over the ages has had its compliment of Rishis, Munis, Saints and Sufis who, from time to time, have appeared among the common people to guide them towards the Ultimate Truth. Among them rose in the middle of the last century a Siddha Purusha, Swami Shankar Razdan, who was revered by all for his spiritual attainments. Swamiji was not only a saint, he had great literary attainments. One of his more important contributions to the Kashmiri literature is his Ramayana in Kashmiri verse in Sharda script. He has left behind many Vakyas which are a source of inspiration to the faithful.

It is unfortunate that because of the perverse mentality of some of his successors, his Ramayana has not seen the light of day in printed form. It should not be difficult at present to transcribe the text from Sharda into Devnagari script for the benefit of the readers. After some time this task may become impossible with the passing away of those people who know the Sharda script. It also needs to be seen that such a precious and a rare manuscript is not made a feast to termites and lost to posterity through the narrow vision of those people in whose possession the manuscript is at the moment.

16.1.2 Vaakh Sidhi

Born in a middle class family at Kaniakadal, Srinagar, Shankar, even in his childhood, had displayed a remarkable Vaakh Sidhi (what he said would come true) which startled people around him. As a child he would babble prayers in incoherent words and be absorbed in contemplation. As such he had not much attachment to the family. His father, a revenue official, was posted in Kulgam, an area abounding in natural beauty. Shankar spent his early days there which brought him closer to nature. The surroundings were in tune with his spiritual make-up and he started his Tapasya in Uttarsu, at a shrine of Umma Bhagwati. He later wanted to shift his place of contemplation to Khirbhavani shrine in Manzgam (Kulgam).

On his way to Manzgam, Swamiji encountered a strange phenomenon. All of a sudden dark clouds started gathering overhead and there followed lightning and cloudbursts, thunderstorms and rains which uprooted trees and rocks started rolling down the Vishaw river and along with it Shankar Razdan was swept away. Swamiji, being a man of prescience, was not afraid of this extraordinary phenomenon. On the contrary he took it as an indication of some supernatural happening. In a flash he saw the Devi on a rock beckoning to him. The Devi extended a corner

of Her 'Longi' to the Swami; he caught hold of it and the Devi pulled him to Herself, applied Tilak on the forehead of the Swami and gave him Khir and other Prashad with Her own hands. The Devi admonished him for frittering away his energies in search of the Divine without a Guru. He should go to one of Her devotees, Swami Zanardan Dhar of Srinagar, to whose care She had given him for future. "He will give you Updesh", said the Devi, and disappeared.

16.1.3 Clear Indication

In a short while the storm subsided, the sky cleared, the sun shone and the Swami found his way to safety. This was a clear indication to the Swami that the Devi to Whom he was going had met him half-way, given him Darshan and confined him to the care of Swami Zanardan. No sooner did Shankar Razdan reach Srinagar, Swami Zanardan came out to greet him and after that Shankar Razdan continued to be a Shishya of Swami Zanardan.

A few instances of the miracles that were performed by the Swami may be narrated here. Once he, along with his other fellow-students, was studying at night. There being no other means of lighting those days, they were studying under an oil lamp. The oil of the lamp dried up and the lamp started to flicker. The students felt disappointed because it was not possible to go out to fetch oil at that late hour to refill the lamp. Shankar told them not to mind and the lamp started to light up brightly to the wonder of his fellow-students. It went on well beyond their requirement. It is possible that it was in remembrance of this event that when a Samadhi was built in the memory of the Swami, it was named the temple of Ratanjot.

16.1.4 'Shankaren Makach'

There is a saying "Shankaren Makach" Shanker's axe. Swami Shankar Razdan used to carry an axe with him and worship it. Once at Bijbehara, when asked what was in that axe that he worshipped it he struck the axe at a huge stone. An axe got stuck in the stone, yet Swamiji's axe continued to be in his hand. It is said that the stone with the axe is still existing.

It was Sawan Pooranmashi, and thousands of people were on pilgrimage to the holy Amarnath cave. The Swami was at his home. He had not gone on pilgrimage. At Amarnath there was a thunderstorm. People were in distress and there was danger of large-scale death and devastation. All of a sudden, Swamiji appeared near the cave deep in Tapasya. The sky cleared and the people were happy at the sight of the Swami. On their return from the cave they did not find the Swami at his place. When they reached Srinagar and narrated their tribulations and mentioned the presence of the Swami there, his disciples were puzzled and asserted that the Swami had never stirred out of his hut.

The British had sent a political mission to Central Asia via Kashmir under the leadership of Douglas Forsythe. The mission was of great significance because the British wanted to checkmate the influence of Russia in this area and the Begs and other petty rulers there could be influenced one way or the other. The impression was given that it would be a joint mission of the Government of India and the Kashmir Government and Maharaja Ranbir Singh was induced to render all assistance to the mission to meet Yaqub Beg who had formed the short-lived independent kingdom of Kashgharia and Yarkand. Queen Victoria of England was deeply interested in the mission and sent presents to the Maharaja. However, the mission did not return for a long time and various search parties were sent out to trace it with no results.

The British got annoyed and furious with Maharaja Ranbir Singh and pressed him hard to find the whereabouts of the mission because its loss involved the interests of the State and the prestige of the Queen herself. The Maharaja got worried and stood in the danger of even being deposed. In spite of his best efforts no trace could be found of the political mission. It was

suggested to him that he might seek the aid of Swami Shankar Razdan, a recluse living in a hut near Chattabal. The Maharaja finding no alternative went personally to the saint.

16.1.5 Godly Intervention

The saint at first expressed his inability to do anything but after much persuasion by his disciples and considering the gravity of the situation for the Maharaja he finally agreed to intervene and said that the mission would return in a few days. And, surely, Douglas Forsythe and his party returned. Asked what had happened to them Forsythe said that while returning they had lost their way and had been wandering over rocks and valleys and had been held by some local chieftains. On the intervention of a Kashmiri (giving the description of Swami Shankar Razdan) they had been released and guided to safety. He also gave the same date of his rescue on which the Maharaja had approached the saint. This narration struck wonder in the whole court and the Maharaja rushed to the saint, bowed before him and made obeisance. This incident became known throughout India, even Britain. Since then Maharaja Ranbir Singh and Maharaja Pratap Singh, who succeeded him, were devotees of the Swami.

16.1.6 Divining Pain

Once Maharaja Ranbir Singh had paid a visit to the saint in his Kutia. With him was his military attaché. The party was offered tea which they most cherished as Prashad from the saint. While offering tea a disciple inadvertently dropped some boiling tea on the shoulder of the military attaché, who could not even squirm in the presence of the Maharaja. Swami Shankar Razdan divined the pain that the military attaché was undergoing. He rubbed the shoulder of the Colonel for some time and the pain went on reducing in the Colonel's shoulder, but blisters appeared on the shoulder of the saint himself. This indicates that when he relieved the tribulations of his devotees he took all the pain upon himself.

There are many miracles which Swami Shankar Razdan performed to relieve the distress of his devotees to bear narration here. It was not for any personal benefit or any consideration that he did good. He lived in a small Kutia at Chattabal, Srinagar, and welcomed everyone who came to him, a pauper or a Raja. The Maharaja wanted to build a residence for the Mahatma which could accommodate comfortably him, and his disciples. With this end in view he deputed his engineers to make a layout plan and an assessment of the proposed Ashram. When the engineers went on the site to take measurements and there was some activity outside the Mahatma's Kutia, he inquired what it was all about. When informed by the engineers about their purpose and the Maharaja's wish to build a mansion for his Ashram, he strictly forbade to take measurements and sent message to the Maharaja that if he felt ashamed to visit his humble Kutia, he (the Maharaja) had better not come to visit him (the saint). This perturbed the Maharaja because he was devoutly attached to the saint and he came forthwith to beg pardon for his temerity.

16.1.7 Adopts Child

Swamiji was a celibate and had no family. Once a widow came to him with the limp body of a child stricken with small-pox in her arms who, she thought, had breathed his last. She cried and wailed before the Swami and told him that it was her only child who was no more. She implored him to do something to bring the child back to life. Everyone present was moved by the pleadings of the widow and implored the Mahatma to grant her boon. After some contemplation Swami Shankar Razdan told the widow that her son might return to life but she should have to part with him. He offered to adopt the child. The widow, for the sake of the life of her child, agreed readily to have nothing to do with him if he came back to life and the Mahatma could adopt him if he liked. The Mahatma sprinkled some holy water from his Puja on the child who

started opening his eyes and making movements. There was great excitement and happiness among the devotees and they fell at the feet of the Mahatma. The child recovered and was named Ramjoo by the Mahatma and adopted by him. He brought up Ramjoo with great care, gave him good education, secular as well as religious.

16.1.8 Offers Spurned

The Maharaja out of consideration for the Mahatma wanted to give a prize post to young Ramjoo. But Swami Shankar Razdan would have none of it. After great persuasion, he allowed his adopted son to take Government service which was the only means of livelihood for Kashmiri Pandits those days. Shri Ramjoo rose step by step to become Military Secretary in the Government, and later adviser to Raja Amar Singh, father of late Maharaja Hari Singh.

Swami Shankar Razdan lived and died in his humble Kutia. The Swami was a man of learning. He wrote extensively and, as mentioned above, his Ramayana in Kashmiri is a unique piece of religious literature which awaits publication. When he attained Mukti the Maharaja got a Samadhi built in his name. It was named Mandir Ratanjot. Though the Mandir is in private hands, it is open to all Hindus, Muslims, Christians and others. Everyone in Chattabal reveres the memory of Swami Shankar Razdan. In the temple are placed the personal effects of the Mahatma, the axe which he worshipped and the offerings made by the Maharajas and other humbler folk. There are many books in the temple (some in Kashmiri-Sharda) which need to be researched upon.

16.1.9 Supernatural

Much of what is written above is recorded history except for the supernatural part which was personal to the disciples and who had profited by his benevolence. This piece is to record for the benefit of those who do not know what spiritual powers our ancestors possessed which they utilized for the good of the mankind.

Source: Koshur Samachar

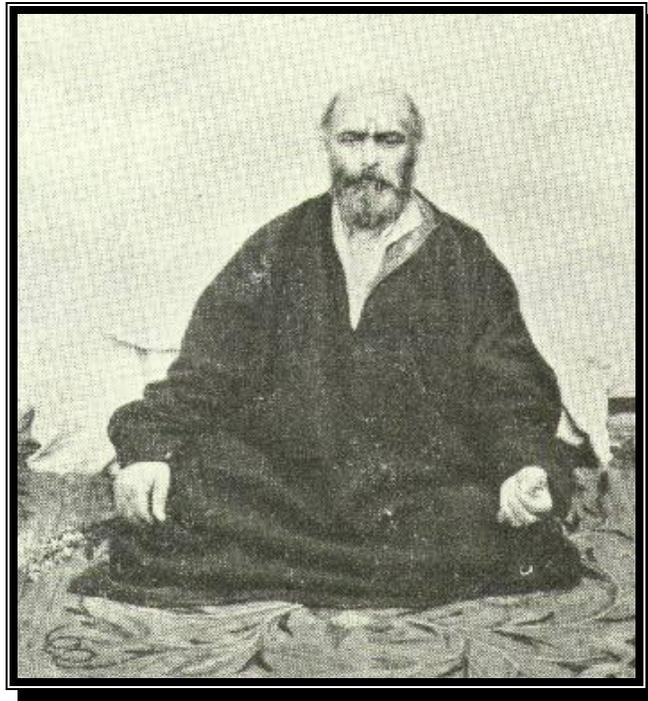
17.0 SWAMI VIDYADHAR

An Embodiment of Intense Sadhana

"A lion performed pradakshina of Swamiji's aasan in the forest"

Prakash Kaul

Swami Vidyadhar was born on the 13th bright day of Ashad 1942 (Bikrami), corresponding to 1886 AD, in an orthodox Brahmin household of a Kanthdhomayan 'Gotra'. His father, Shri Ganakak Razdan (Khonmushi) died when Vidhlal, (the Swami's parental name) was only six. His mother, Harmali, was from a respectable Khushoo family of Malayar and an embodiment of the finest traditions of Indian womanhood. His elder brother, Shri Gopi Nath, entrusted him to the able care of Shri Madhav Joo Chander and Shri Rajkak Ganz for being taught in the traditional Brahminic ritual. Later he obtained the degree of Visharad.



Swami Vidyadhar Courtesy: Pran & Asha Chaku, Houston, TX (1997)

17.1.1 Devout Behavior

Right from his boyhood Vidyadhar astounded everyone by his sharp intellect and humility. He had a sharp memory and a resolute disposition. For his devout behavior and ability, he was deeply loved by his teachers and others. At the age of 15, he was married to Shrimati Padmavati, the illustrious daughter of Shri Rishi Kak Kalu, a noble Brahmin.

There is no record how and when Vidyadhar surrendered himself at the feet of his master, Yogiraj Ramji. Swami Ramji, the embodiment of all pervading bliss, initiated and taught many of his disciples chief among them being Swami Mahtab Kak, Swami Vidyadhar and Swami Govind Kaul. The backdrop of this stream of Gurus is depicted thus in Shri Vidyadharastava.

Vidyadhar studied Shastras under his Guru and also received initiation into mysteries of the 'Shaiva Sadhana'. Swami Ramji was a perfect Guru - Stroti and Brahmnisht. It was the

benevolence of the Lord Himself personified in Swami Ramji that guided the real Sadhakas like Vidyadhar. By and by Vidyadhar became absorbed in his inner self and the only longing he had was to free himself from the mundane chorus of household activities. He attended his worldly jobs with more of a detached bent of mind. During this period, Vidyadhar lost his mother. He was only 28 and still a perfect Sadhaka. Gradually, he lost all taste for worldly life and he would remain aloof confined mostly to a room in his house. Occasionally, however, he would teach scriptures to those who came to him.

Then came the turning point. In 1915, Swami Ramji shed his mortal frame. From now onwards, it became virtually impossible for Vidyadhar to remain confined to the four walls of his house. In 1919 came the breakthrough. He left his home and remained for some time at the holy place of Thajiwara - a hallowed place near Bijbehara. Thence, he went to the aloofness of Kamlavan a solitary place near village Tral. An SOS from his elder Gurubhai, Swami Mahtab Kak, unsettled his future plans. Swami Mahtab Kak, after the exit of his Guru, was in command of Shri Ram Shaiva Ashram. The Gurubhai asked him to return home apparently on the entreaties of his (Vidyadhar's) father-in-law. He would not spurn the directive of the Gurubhai.

17.1.2 Wandering Monk

His stay at home did not, however, check the strong yearning for the life of a wandering monk. At times, the future care of his small children would flash through the ascetic Vidyadhar's otherwise serene mind. At the same time, the absolute mood, said euphemistically that he did not like to see majority of his Srinagar disciples running agitatedly here and there. All laughed far it referred to the usual practice of Srinagar disciples going to villages where Swamiji would stay, entreating him to come over to Srinagar.

17.1.3 Last Days

On Amavasi at about 10-30 a.m. Swamiji addressed three of his disciples present rather unexpectedly thus: "World is changing fast and Adharma is growing. It is better that you people be of some help to these mortal remains". Then he asked one of his disciples to check up the 'Tithi' from the 'Panchang' while going to the bathroom down in the courtyard. When Swamiji came back the disciples informed about the 'Tithi' and 'Mahurat'. With a smile, the Swami said "All right" and wiped his hands and feet with a towel. A few moments later his body had a paralytic attack and, simultaneously, the outward sensations ceased. The body remained in this state for about two-and-a-half days amidst the continuous chanting of hymns by the great concourse of disciples and other people. On the third bright day of the Margshirsh at about 3 a.m. the numb body of Swamiji opened eyes at the conclusion of the Bhairavstotra of Swami Abhinavagupta. The eyes were full of tears.

The Bhaktas started the daily Aarti and at its conclusion the mortal frame ceased to breathe. The revered Gurumata of the disciples, Shrimati Padmavati, had also come there after 30 years of her seclusion and Sadhana and paid homage to her departing illustrious consort. In deference to the wishes of the Swami, expressed to some of his disciples, the last rites were observed without any fanfare.

Many are the anecdotes of Swami Vidyadhar's acts of benevolence and miracles to which even to this day many are eyewitness. To respect the sentiments of Swamiji's disciples not to write about any such miracles of their illustrious Guru, it would not be worthwhile to recall all the majesty of the Yogi both in his spiritual and social spheres.

17.1.4 Compositions

Swamiji had great command over Sanskrit grammar and language and an astounding hold on Shastras. In his moments of intense Bhakti, he composed some devotional Sanskrit poems and many of these hymns are popular among the Kashmiris even to this day. The hymn to 'Rangy Bhagwati' forms part and parcel of the 'Aarti' being recited at Kheerbhawani.

For his erudition he was called lovingly Vidyadhar and rightly so. Swamiji, throughout his life, remained an embodiment of intense Sadhana and complete detachment. Self-abnegation and an unflinching faith in himself were hall-marks of his illustrious life. Never in his life did he show any traces of exhibitionism; in fact, he shunned all such extraneous propensities. He lived a simple ascetic's life. Never after renunciation did he touch money. He had absolutely left 'Kamini' and 'Kanchan' as Sri Ramakrishna Paramhansa enjoins upon the travelers on spiritual path in his gospel.

The Swami knew no fear and showed great courage in going against the tradition in dealing with matters of suffering and injustice. It will be fit to recall some of the prominent incidents in his life which undoubtedly show his lofty disposition.

At the death of one of his sons, a relative came to Swamiji apparently to offer his condolences and in the process wept bitterly. Swamiji gave him sympathy and advised him not to grieve over the inevitable.

Once when Swamiji was coming down the stairs of his Ashram for his usual 'Sandhya' a thief loaded with articles stolen from the Ashram passed his way and even paid homage to him. In the morning when disciples informed him of the theft, he told them that a man loaded with the stolen articles had paid him respects in the early hours of the morning and he did not catch him then.

Among Kashmiri Pandits, there was a subcaste called 'Leji Bhat' who due to changing fortunes of the valley had got converted at some distant past and had reverted to their parent faith subsequently. Even though their lives were ideal, high caste Brahmins would not even partake the meals prepared by them. Likewise, was the situation for the Bohra sub-caste in the Pandit community. Swamiji could stand no such differentiation. He initiated fairly good number of disciples from among the sub-castes and started a slow but sure propaganda against this high-handedness of the so-called top-class and orthodox Brahmins.

17.1.5 Menace Eliminated

Finally, a big Yagya was organized by the sub-castes at Bijbehara. Swamiji invited all the learned and orthodox Brahmins of the valley to the Yagya along with other leaders of the Pandit community. They could not spurn his offer. At the conclusion of the Yagya food was served by the brethren who had been wronged and everybody took the meals. Thus the menace to the integrity of the Pandit community was eliminated.

Swamiji was fond of music and often musicians, both Hindus and Muslims, used to recite rare Sufi and devotional poetry of great Siddhas like Parmanand and Laleshwari to him. One among them was Swami's constant companion. Swamiji loved him like a child. But the musician married a Muslim girl and got alienated from his community. Some time later, the musician left the company of the girl and came to Swamiji after a period of self-imposed exile. While others despised him, the Swami received him with open arms. Nothing had changed the love of the Swami for his child.

17.1.6 Playful Countenance

That was Swami Vidyadhar, the great saint who would keep the audiences spell-bound by his sweet voice and great discourses, opening new vistas of spiritual path. This scribe, whose father was a disciple of Swamiji, had the great fortune of his constant company right from his early childhood to his early teens. He cherishes the playful countenance of the great Yogi for the Yogi seemed to be his playmate all the time he was in contact with him. He vividly recollects the mock horse which the Yogi would lovingly offer himself to be while the writer as a conscious Balak rode on his back.

Source: **Koshur Samachar**

18.0 SWAMI SONAKAK JI

"A benign Saint who helped the country and people in distress"

Swami Sonakak, one of the greatest mystic saints of Kashmir was known variously as Sona Bab (father), Sona Bayu or Sona Matoo (spiritually possessed).

He was born in the year 1878 AD in Srinagar and attained Mahanirvana in the year 1942. His younger brother Swami Rugh Bayu too was a saint but no where near the spiritual advancement his brother had achieved.

Swamiji's father, though a priest by profession was a well recognized "Grahasd Saint" and was popularly known as "Lori-Pir" wielding a stick all the time. He had permission from Maharaja Pratap Singh Ji to roam round the Palace wherever and whenever he liked. The Maharaja knew him as a saint who could not only foretell the future but also help people in their advancement.

From his early boyhood, Swami Sonakak was man of dispassion. In his early youth, he assisted his father in his profession an right, but he would also find time to visit the cremation ground near Khak Chowk for a daily round of Upasana, presumably of Suchindnath Bhairow. He appears to have attained Sakshatkar whilst there, but this had unhinged him both physically and mentally. It did not take people long in discerning that there was a method in his madness and no wonder those who did not have a discerning eye to see in him a "Trikal Darshi" looked upon him as an unsound man.

While roaming through the streets of Srinagar he would sometimes suddenly fall into a fit of temper and start abusing people. Presumably he did this to scare away people who would otherwise naturally have pestered him with their personal problems. The next moment he would sit on a shop either demanding tea or smoke his "Chellem" all at peace with himself and the world around. He would even offer tea to people around him and answer queries indirectly, rarely directly.

Though he seldom changed his clothes which looked filthy and dark with oil stains standing out as sentinels in a desolate desert, he invariably changed while going to answering the ca11s of nature followed by a bath soon afterwards with cold water even in sub-zero temperature. Rarely he would sport a Tilak.

Throngs of people gathered round him wherever he went. He saw to it that everybody around was served tea or given a bit of whatever was available. He rarely accepted presents but readily accepted what he himself demanded.

Swamiji had many devotees but few disciples. One of his well known devotees was Dr. Gwash Lal, a renowned and gifted physician of his time in Kashmir. To humble his pride (Ego) Swamiji once made him go along the streets of Srinagar with a bund1e of firewood on his shoulders. Of his initiated disciples Shri Bishember Nath Zutshi was a great 'tyagi'.

Swamiji left his ancestral home in Kharyar, Srinagar in Baisakh 1985 (Bikrami) as his single storey house collapsed. He shifted to the residence of Shri Shridharjoo Dhar at Alikadal. Occupying a room in the ground floor he continued to live there for 14 years. A couple of months before his Mahanirvana he moved to the residence of Dr. Gwash Lal Kaul at Sheikh Bagh for sometime and then shifted back to his Alikadal residence. On the 8th of Baisakh 1999 (Bikrami) he started on the Last lap of his journey. Before doing that, he vacated the room he had occupied for 14 years, made a bonfire of his bedding, mats etc. returned the metallic utensils (after heating) given him by people for use. He left behind no relics whatsoever. He then went to one Shri Sham Lal's house who was his devotee and spent the night there. Next

day he ordered a pot of curd which he took to 4th Bridge and facing the sacred shrine of Mahakali, immersed it in the river Jehlum. He then went to the residence of Dr. Mela Ram, his another disciple. While there he ordered a "Doonga" (covered boat) and moved to Pokhirbal Shrine next morning with a few people along with some rice and other Hawan Samagrih. Soon after the boat anchored at Pokhirbal. Swamiji declared that he had the Divine Mother's permission to leave his mortal coil and saying this he put the Hawan Samagrih, rice etc. in the Shri Sharika Bhagawad's spring there. This done he ordered the boat to turn back keeping two lighted lanterns on his either side. These lanterns continued burning till he gave up his mortal frame the next evening. As soon as the boat reached near Gadadhar Temple next evening and just before his Mahasamadhi, he ordered all the occupants out of the boat except Shri Bishamber Zutshi, Shri Bishamber Das and Shri Said-ud-Din. Shri Bishamber Nath was asked to prepare tea immediately which he served to him. Said-ud-Din and Bishamber Das were asked to take the remaining tea outside. He then removed all his clothes, sat in Padmasama with Bishamber Nath supporting his back and attained Mahasamadhi on Chaitra Durga Ashtami just before sunset. The boat was moved to Kharyar and his body placed in his ancestral home for Darshan till the next noon when it was carried to the cremation ground followed by a large assembly of people. The cremation was done at a particular place, which according to the attendant had been selected by Swamiji himself two days earlier, though he had never gone there in the Sthula Sharira but presumably by Sukhshma Sharira.

Though Swamiji is no more he still inspires, many who have known him and helps them out of their difficulties and protects them all.

Both Swamiji and his brother were life long Brahmacharis and left no direct descendants. His devotees had got erected a temple in his name in the premises of his ancestral home but after his younger brother's death, his younger sister claiming right to the ancestral house, sold it on the plea that the sale proceeds would be utilized to perform their "Baah" (Nirvana ceremony). The purchaser was a Hindu but he mutilated the memorial temple. Apparently Swamiji did not approve the idea of such a memorial.

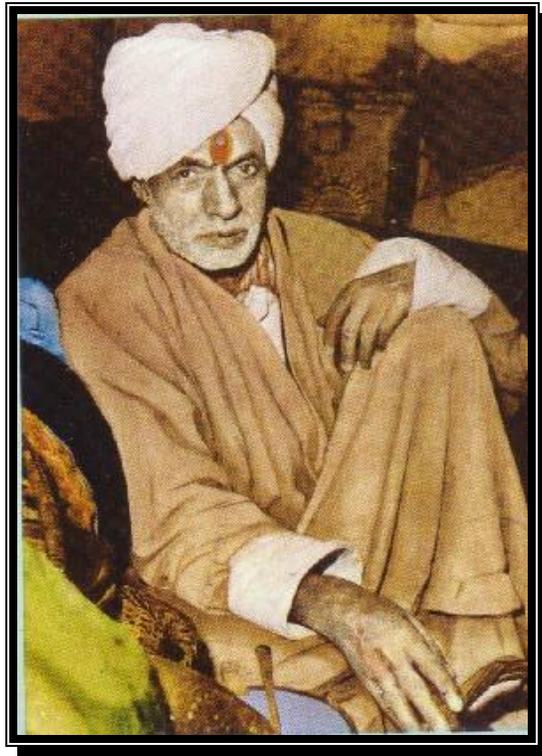
He was a benign saint who helped the country and its people.

Source: Koshur Samachar

19.0 BHAGWAAN GOPINATH JI

Bhagwaanji was veritably God in the human form. This became unmistakably evident to the discerning among his devotees who found him ever-absorbed in the universal consciousness. He would come down to our plane of consciousness only when prompted to answer queries by the seekers and would then instantly return to his exalted state of divine bliss.

A model of utmost simplicity and humility, he could be mistaken for the ordinary. But deep inside him was hidden the saint extra-ordinary, a Yogi of the highest order who had all the elements at his command, who could transform a person with a mere touch or glance. He not only helped the seekers advance on the path of spirituality, but gave liberally out of his "Bounty" to relieve his devotees in distress and even granted many of them fulfillment of their worldly aspirations.



Bhagwan GopiNath Ji

Bhagwaanji had attained full union with the "Paramatman" long before he gave up his mortal coil and attained "Mahasamadhi". Having got identified with "Siva-Sakti", his energetic activity continues unabated. For the devotees he is as accessible now as he was in physical form.

Bhagwaanji is believed to have counselled his devotees not to bother themselves about awakening the "kundalini", for he considered it a risky undertaking that could harm and mislead them. Instead, he helped the seekers in "experiencing" divine illumination through direct transmission. In his hallowed presence, the true seeker felt an "overseeing power" bringing him to the path of righteousness; the change wrought in him was spontaneous and durable.

We should constantly have Bhagwaanji in our thoughts, and make it our habit to turn inwardly to him in deep prayer to earn his benedictions. Through his grace alone can we contribute our mite

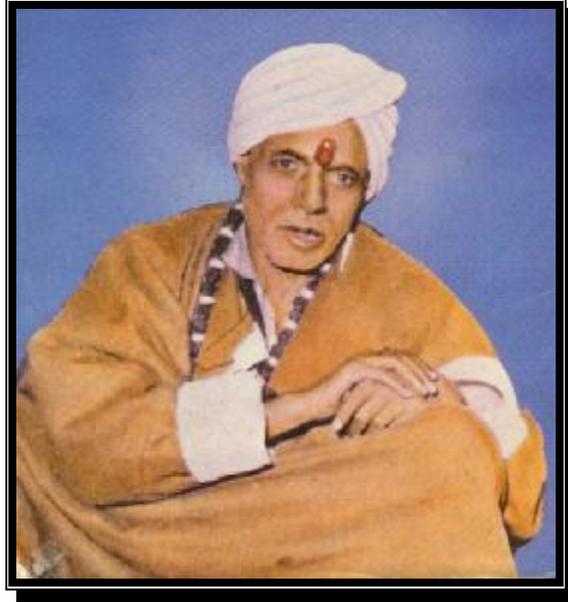
to running the programmes and institutions under the aegis of Bhagwaan GopiNath Ji Trust.. Jai BhagwaanJi

Source: Patrika

19.1 Bhagwan GopiNath Ji

The Great Aghoreshwar - "Guides his devotees even now, as he did when in human form"

Shiva Nath Katju



Bhagwan GopiNath Ji

Kashmir has produced many Sanskrit scholars of renown. Its savants and sages who expounded Kashmir Shaivism, such as Utpaladeva, Somananda and others, and, to crown them all, Mahamaheshwar Shrimad Abhinavagupta have made lustrous contributions to our philosophy and their fame has spread all over the world. Kashmir is the fountain-source of Kashmir Krama in Shiva-Shakti worship, the other two being the Kerala Krama and the Gour Krama. It has also produced Kaulas and Aghoreshwars of the tallest stature, the last of whom was Bhagwan Gopinath who left his mortal frame in 1968. His spiritual stature could easily be compared to Maharishi Raman, Shri Ramakrishna Paramhansa and Shri Aurobindo.

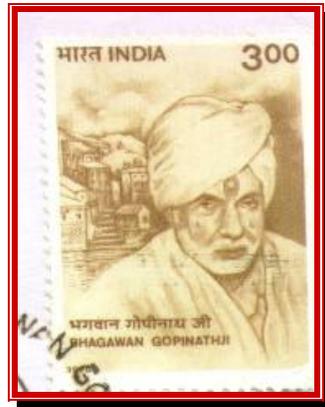
19.1.1 Cloistered Life

Bhagwan Gopinath lived a very cloistered life. He was known only to a few close devotees. He never moved out of the valley. Gradually, his fame spread and saints and sadhus from different parts of India used to visit him. By his intense Sadhana he had become a Kaul and an Aghoreshwar of the highest order. He talked little and never preached but he was full of compassion and love for all who sought his protection and blessings. He had the healing touch and gave boons to the needy. Occasionally, he exercised his spiritual powers in the interest of the nation. Pandit Shanker Nath Fotedar in his Biography of Bhagwan Gopinath was given a vivid account of the life of the Great Kaul. The biography has been translated into Hindi by Pandit Rama Dutt Shukla, the General Secretary of the All-India Shakta Sammelan.

Savants and sages in India have experimented in the realm of the spirit since time immemorial. By following diverse paths they have sought to see the ultimate truth face to face. In all ages many have attempted to seek spiritual knowledge but only a few have succeeded in reaching the top. The Shastras describe such spiritual giants as Kauls and Aghoreshwars. In popular parlance, Kaulachar or Aghor is regarded as indicating some kind of a sect or order. Kaulas are regarded as persons belonging to an order who use wine and women in their spiritual practices and Aghories as those who live in utter disregard of normal social behavior of cleanliness in matters of habit and diet. If such were the case then every drunkard and debauch and every person who wallows in filth and consumes huge quantities of Ganja and Bhang would be a spiritual giant. Suffice it to say that such popular conceptions are ridiculous and absurd.

19.1.2 Last Climb

Both among the Shaktas and the Shaivas the last climb is indicated with clarity and the way up and the means to reach the summit are clearly shown. It is the stage prior to the start of creation or when creation ends and before it starts all over again. At this point Shiva and Shakti are wrapped in together and are One and there is nothing besides that One. In that stage He cannot be seen because there is no one to see Him or bow to His majesty and certainly He is beyond any ritual worship. No Yantra, circle, triangle or Bindu can adequately symbolize the absolute void or blankness when manifestation itself remains an idea in the mind of the Creator -Param Shiva as the Shaivas and Shakta Agamas call Him. The Sanskrit word 'Shunya' is the only word that can be used to express such utter nothingness. An artist's canvas while portraying this stage of "Total Nothingness" except Him would remain blank, may be with a background showing absolute void, if there could be any such background. He in that stage is beyond any portrayal because even Gods do not know Him in His aspect as Param Shiva.



The Department of Posts has issued a commemorative postage stamp in honor of Bhagwan GopiNath Ji on the occasion of his birth centenary.

It is the glory of Shakta and Shaiva Sadhana that it takes the Sadhak to the highest point which is humanly possible to reach in his quest of the unknown. It is sufficient in this context to say that the most elite of the Shaiva and Shakta Sadhaks are instructed in the knowledge of Aghora and Paravidya.

19.1.3 Highest Summit

In this climb to the highest summit the Devi is seen as gradually withdrawing Herself from Her play (Lila) and merging Herself into the prime source from where She has emerged. Unlike the earlier stages in the Sadhana where the Sadhak sees Her in Her dazzling cosmic play the focus

of attention now turns more and more towards Shiva In Aghora and Paravidya the Sadhak's thoughts are directed towards Param Shiva. Realization of Para and Aghora, which can be equated, the highest stage which a Sadhak can attain and having attained it he becomes a Kaul or Aghoreshwar and a Shiva or Bhairava himself and is entitled to say Shivo. Bhagwan Ram of Varanasi, one of the greatest Aghoreshwars of present-day India, has described the state of a Kaul or Aghoreshwar in the following words (the English rendering is mine):-

"An Aghoreshwar reaches a state where he is totally freed from all Karmic bonds. For him there is neither Moksha (liberation) nor rebirth. He becomes a burnt seed which cannot sprout. When he leaves his mortal frame he lives and directs from the astral plane or he may enter the body of a living person and make him an instrument of his line of action. He is not subject to the currents of cause and effect which bind the ordinary mankind. He is law unto himself". In short he becomes the sun of his own solar system and performs acts either directly or indirectly which may appear to be baffling.

Bhagwan Gopinath belonged to this spiritual line (Parampara) of Kauls and Aghoreshwars. He had reached the highest stage of self-realization and what he did and .said during his life-time have become the subject matter of a legend. He could perform wonders but he lived the life of a recluse and an ascetic.

Bhagwan Ram of Varanasi has now brought him to "Kreem Kund", one of the oldest and most sacred shrines in Varanasi, and he now sits in the midst of a galaxy of Aghoreshwars there. The significance of the awakening of ,the great invisible galaxy in Kreem Kund will only be known as the future unfolds itself in the present stormy and tumultuous period. Besides the Satsang Mandal in the Kreem Kund, Bhagwan Gopinath Jee Satsang Mandals have been established at Allahabad and other places in India. Bhagwan Gopinath seems to be more alive now after leaving his mortal body. His influence, guidance and direction are being increasingly felt all over India.

Source: Koshur Samachar

19.2 Jagadguru Bhagwaan Gopinath Ji

The Inimitable Sage - "whose influence is being felt in even greater measure now"

G. N. Raina

"**Your** Guru has directed me to grace you"- these words were uttered by no less a spiritual luminary than Shri Satya Sai Baba of Puttaparti to a close devotee of Bhagawaan Gopinath Ji when he approached the sage in Bombay at the behest of his son-in-law to seek Grace for overcoming his bodily ailment. The Baba moved his right hand, and poured some holy ash to be taken orally and lo and behold, the devotee instantaneously got rid of his physical pain. The Baba, then, continued saying, "Your Guru was the greatest Kashmiri saint: he was Jiwan Mukta in the real sense. He will appear before you in about two months". This was in December 1973, nearly six years after the Bhagawaan had left his mortal coil.

Bhagawaan Gopinath Ji did keep his date and he appeared to the said devotee twice in the subsequent two months (Jan-Feb 1974).

An embodiment of com- passion for all those who sought his grace, Bhagawaan Gopinath Ji has been and continues to be an unfailing source of solace to their afflicted souls. Men and women, young and old, the educated and the unlettered, the agnostics and the believers, would visit him, in and out of season, to receive words of comfort which would still the throbbing pain of their hearts.

Kashmir has produced a galaxy of saints and sages from times immemorial, and in recent past we have had a number of them. But few among the contemporaries have left as indelible an impression on the minds of the people as Bhagawaan Gopinath Ji. Two highly venerated mystics of contemporary Kashmir -- Kashkak and Nanda Bab, recognised Bhagawaan Ji's greatness. While Swami Kashkak is on record as saying that Bhagawaan Ji has been the recipient of special grace of Mother Sharika, Swami Nandlalji described Bhagawaan as "the king of saints in Kashmir".

Bhagawaan Gopinath Ji led a simple, austere life. He never moved out of Kashmir: in fact, he shunned publicity, and covered himself with anonymity. Sadhus and saints from outside Kashmir did visit him. A celibate, he lived with his near relations all his life. Though he read up to middle standard only, yet he displayed a fair knowledge of Sanskrit, Persian, Urdu and English. He spoke very little, never preached, puffed Chillum constantly and always remained engrossed in Brahman, so much so a casual visitor would remain unnoticed by him for hours together.

A Siddha, having attained the Olympic heights of spirituality, Bhagawaan Gopinath Ji was an enigmatic God-man. His life was a curious blend of Jnana (knowledge), Bhakhti (devotion) and Karma (action). For most of us who had had the good fortune of his darshan in flesh and blood, he was the holiest of the holy, with a healing touch and wielding Ashta Sidhis for the good of the people and the nation. To some others, his bizarre behaviour presented a picture of his inscrutability. His marijuana smoking, his non-vegetarianism and unorthodox ways were an enigma to the uninitiated. Ordinary mortals like us could hardly fathom his 'Gunateet' and 'Mayateet' nature.

Born in a respected Bhan family of Kashmiri Pandits in Srinagar on 3rd of July, 1898, Bhagawaan Gopinath Ji almost inherited spiritual fervour from his highly religious minded father and mother. His mother was born to her parents following the grant of a boon by Goddess Rajnya herself. Bhagawaan Gopinath Ji had two brothers and two sisters. While the elder brother was a bachelor, the one younger to him did marry but remained issueless. The two sisters unfortunately lost their husbands early, the elder one after bearing two daughters and the younger one after bearing two sons and two daughters. Bhagawaan Ji was looked after by his elder sister and her two daughters.

From the days of infancy, Bhagawaan Gopinath Ji, showed little interest in things material. He would sing the glories of God, of Mother Sharika and seize whatever opportunity he could get to attend bhajan mandalis and raslilas. The spirit of renunciation and the other-worldliness had overtaken his sensitive young mind. That is why his schooling was not complete and he did not take seriously to his uncle's Pashmina business either. He did take up the job of a compositor in the city's oldest press-Vicinity Press, but gave it up only after three years, during which period the press is said to have flourished. Bhagawaan ji rejected the entreaties of the proprietor of the Press saying that his "Dasdaraz" with him had ended. Later, he started a grocer's shop which he gave up soon after to plunge headlong into a rigorous tapasya.

From the age of 20, he had begun daily Parikrama of Hari Parbat and would spend hours in Devi Angan absorbed in the meditation of the Divine Mother. Of course, Chillum was his constant companion, even in those days. This period of his Sadhana was marked by devotion to the Shakti aspect of Godhead. He used to recite from memory hymns like Panchastavi, Bhawani Sahasranama, Saundaryalahri Vishnu Sahasranam, Mahimna Stotra, Utpalastotravali, Guru Gita and Bhagwadgita.

Not much is known about who initiated him. The well-known biographer of Bhagawaan ji, Shri S.N. Fotedar has tried to lay his hand on all evidences in this regard but has not been able to establish who his Guru was. Here, we would like to accept what Bhagawaan ji himself hinted at,

obliquely though. On being asked, only a few years before his Nirvana, as to who his Guru was, he replied "any one of the 700 Shlokas of Gitaji can be one's Guru".

The second and the most important phase of his quest for self realization began when he was 32. For the next seven years, i.e. up to the age of 39, he wrestled with God, so to say. In this period of intense tapasya, he would lie on a bed, face towards the wall, with a lamp burning in his room which would often be covered with layers of dust. It is said that a rat made a hole in one of his heels which took a long time to heal. He had almost lost all consciousness of his body. He would often take Datura seed, opium and other intoxicants and would, at times vomit blood.

While it is difficult, nay impossible, to assess the state of Bhagawaan Ji's spiritual advancement during this period, we have a clue given again by Bhagawaan Ji himself in a cryptic reply he gave to his elder sister when she tried to persuade him to take to worldly life in view of the financial difficulties the family was in. He told her, "Sister, our boat is in the midst of an ocean. Either we will reach the shore safely or get drowned".

To our great good luck, Bhagawaan Gopinath Ji did swim to the shore and out of the great ordeal of seven long years emerged a Siddha, with of course, a mauled body but a radiant spirit, with full vision of past, present and future. He had realized his true self and become one with Siva, the Ultimate Truth.

The truths of spirit can be apprehended only by those who like Bhagawaan Ji prepare themselves for their reception by rigorous discipline. It was not for nothing that in later years, he would often tell his close devotees that "MEHNAT PANANYA BIYI GURU KRIPA", meaning that intense personal effort and the grace of Guru are the essential pre-requisites of God realization.

Devotees like Prof. K.N. Dhar feel that Bhagawaan Ji inclined towards the Tantric method of Sadhana. According to him, "Bhagawan Gopinath Ji opted for the more strenuous path of Tantras with its curves and bends and wove the threads of his life on this texture". This body, says Rudrayamala Tantra, is an oblation which is to be continuously offered to the fire of self scrutiny. The unextinguishing Dhooni in front of Bhagawaan Ji since the end of the seven-year spiritual odyssey symbolized this truth.

After realizing the dynamic aspect of Reality, i.e., the Divine Mother, Bhagawaan Ji took to the worship of Siva, the pure consciousness aspect of Truth. Siva is Infinite Consciousness, the subject as well as the object. Siva and Sakti are one indivisible whole. While Siva is the changeless reality underlying the entire universe, his energy, Shakti, has an infinity of aspects - Chit (intellect), Ananda (bliss), Ichha (will), Jnana (knowledge) and Kriya (creative work). The recognition (Pratyabijna) of reality, according to Kashmiri Saivist thought, is all that is needed for Moksha. That is why Bhagawaan Gopinath Ji was recognized as Jeewan Mukta (a liberated soul).

Again, Siva and Shakti, in the Ultimate analysis, constitute the contours of a common rather than a specific gender. The male (Nar) and the female (Nari) aspects of Reality are fused together in the case of Tantrik mystics who have often been observed to give feminine names to males and vice versa. One of the foremost Tantrik mystics of Kashmir, Swami Anandji of Jamnagari often addressed his male disciples as females, perhaps to demonstrate that gender had lost all meaning for him and the likes of him. The great sage-poetess of yore, Lal Ded, looked upon all males as females.

An important aspect of Bhagawaan Gopinath Ji's spiritual Sadhana was emission of well-controlled rhythmic vibrations from various parts of his body. Spanda Shastra of Kashmir Saivism speaks of the vibratory nature of ultimate reality. In the last 30 years of his earthly existence, Bhagawaan Ji would keep talking to invisible forces while he would be smoking his

Chillum. At times, he would not even respond to people around him. None dared disturb him while puffing his Chillum with his eyes turned skyward, emitting and receiving vibrations. Always immersed in Samadhi, he would come down to our plane of consciousness when his attention was drawn, speak a few words and then go back to the same state. It was quite apparent that Chillum symbolized the vehicle of his communion with the Divine. The inhaling of the smoke acted as an aid for supra- mental dialogue with the Ultimate Truth. In such planes of mystic exhilaration, natural propensities of human organs are said to reverse the roles, where the eyes can speak, the ears can see and the mouth can feel. The senses are said to be under complete control and the mystic utilises them the way he thinks is the best. This stage is known as DIWA SHAKTI.

There is neither East nor West for the naked soul. The whole world is its home and as its home is in each of us, it belongs to all of us". These words of the French Savant, Romain Rolland, are true of all great saints, savants and sages, Bhagawaan Gopinath Ji belongs to the entire world. There was no Hindu, Mussalman or Christian for him. All religions and all faiths led to the same goal. He once told a close devotee of his. "Think of Brahman as a Tree and sit on any one of its branches. All branches will lead you to the same goal". As Isa Upanisad puts it, this entire universe is enveloped by God, and nothing but God.

Bhagawaan Gopinath Ji laid stress on Vichar, rational thought and the ability to discriminate between the real and the unreal, and he would often say that "a Yogi may attain realisation of God but it is only the Vicharvan, the discerning sage and the profound seer, who can fathom all aspects of the Brahman, the Ultimate Truth." He confirmed the faith of the devotees in whatever they held dear and guided them according to their capacity. Though he suggested Saakar Upasana (worship of God with form) to the beginners, he would say Yi Gav Taaph Parun meaning that it was just like worshipping the effulgence and not the substance of the sun. On yet another occasion, he told a Sakar Upasak "you have light to the level of your throat but your body is blank". He wanted his devotees to realize the absolute truth in all its aspects.

Bhagawaan Gopinath Ji advocated special efforts on the part of a spiritual aspirant. He abhorred lackadaisical form of Upasana which he thought was like moving under the shade of willow trees, Yi Gav Veeri Shihilis Tal Pakun. He wanted Truth Seekers to plunge into God realization with complete surrender.

He would often urge the devotees to lift the veil of ego that enveloped Atman. AHANKAARAS NAMASKAAR - SUI GAV OMKAAR - TAMI SAATI BANI SAAKSHATKAAR, which means, "bid good-bye to Ego and be face to face with reality."

Here, one would recall an incident when a saintly person was dissuaded by a scholar-saint from visiting Bhagawaan ji, saying "since when have you started bowing to lumps of muck?" And when the said gentleman went to see Bhagawaan ji, he was asked, "Why do you come to bow before lumps of muck? We are not chiselled scholars." A nice, subtle dig at the scholar-saint! How true! It is the meek, the humble, the unsophisticated who shall be saved rather than those with inflated egos.

He never advised anyone to give up his household, wife or children in the quest of Truth. According to him, a worldly man, a Grihasta, could be a man of dispassion and reach the Ultimate. But he was quite adamant in not guiding those who could not practise celibacy, for he believed that the two centres of Brahma Jnana were located in the Cit (intellect) - one near and the other beyond the back of Chidakasha and that these centres were well preserved only by remaining celibate.

In our spiritual tradition, there are two ways to attain God- head-the one is known as the Buddha way where you tread the path alone, better known in scriptures as tapasya in which individual

effort dominates, and the other is to cross the ocean of existence through the medium of a Guru who represents the Divine, who knows the path and is in a position to help others in finding it. The Guru seeks to awaken much more than to instruct, says the great Yogi, Aurobindo Ghosh in his famous work Synthesis of Yoga. And Bhagawaan Gopinath Ji himself said on one occasion, when a verse in Kashmiri extolling the virtues of a Guru was being sung, YI GACHHI YACHHUN. It is an indication of God's grace, if one surrenders at the feet of the Guru.

He did not deliver sermons. He initiated a devotee and induced Parmarth (spirituality) by a touch, a mere glance and by sharing his chillum. Each received his grace according to one's Karma.

Strange are the goings-on of mystics. We recognise their greatness on the basis of something they do which is not explained by the ordinary laws of nature. And we describe these ways as mysterious. Saints and sages have been known to have a clear vision, with ability to read the thoughts of others, forecast events, prescribe remedies and clear impediments.

The saints, however are not to be judged by miracles alone, for some of them are really averse to demonstrations of this sort as they do not wish to interfere with nature. But, again, as Bhagawaan Raman Maharishi of Tiruvanamalai put it, "it is enough for the thoughts of a Jnani to be turned in any direction and the automatic divine activity begins". As if to prove beyond doubt the efficacy of what Shri Raman Maharishi had said about miracles, Bhagawaan Gopinath Ji, during his Amarnath Yatra, addressed an overcast sky at Wavjan above the sacred Sheshnag lake, "You settle down in Sheshnag" and in no time was the sky clear of the black clouds and the thousands of pilgrims resumed journey without fear of a bad weather.

Kind and compassionate as Bhagawaan Gopinath Ji was, he cured incurable diseases like blood cancer, and he would often ask those stricken with malignant diseases to be brought to him and a mere glance or touch would cure them completely, to the surprise of all. On request, he would give some ash from his Dhooni to cure ailments. Diabetes, Tuberculosis, brain hemorrhages and mental disorders were cured by him. He never asked for any money, though whatever was offered was accepted only to be distributed among those present. Once he referred to these offerings (money, fruits, sweets etc) as blood. This is all blood, he would say. And, it is said, he took upon himself any evil attached to such offerings.

A mystic tradition has it that at a particular point of time, a Divine Government functions and oversees the workings of human mind. It also directs the world affairs. Bhagawaan Gopinath Ji was regarded the king of this Divine set up in the State. In this context, one can understand what happened in 1947 and 1948 in the aftermath of a tribal raid conducted surreptitiously by Pakistan into the territory of Jammu and Kashmir.

In 1947, in one of his soliloquies, Bhagawaan Ji was heard saying: "What is our army doing? They get so much ration and yet do not open a direct route to Kashmir for Ladakhi Lamas." And in 1948, we witnessed Indian army conquering Zojilla Pass and Kargil, thus establishing a direct link with Ladakh. A Military Police Officer connected with this operation was informed by the Front Commander that the operations were directed by a mysterious person, giving his identification clues. Long after that, the said Military Police Officer, a Christian, did visit Bhagawaan Ji in Srinagar through the courtesy of one Mr. T.N. Dhar and the officer confirmed that the saint exactly answered to the description given by the Front Commander.

This is not all, In September 1962, when he was at Bhadrakali, Bhagawaan Ji told his sister and Swami Amritananda who accompanied him, "Don't you see what is happening across the mountains? A whiff of wind from that side will blow you over". Rest is a matter of history. Again, before the 1965 war, he pointed towards south-west and said, Kaala (death) was dancing there. At the end of the hostilities, however, he pointed out that "the west is clear now".

Bhagawaan Gopinath Ji used to sit on his aasan almost all the 24 hours absorbed in Higher Self. Every morning he would wash his face and Yajnopavit at the water tap, tie his turban and put on saffron tilak with a touch of ash in the centre. And then he would start his Dhooni. He would rarely take bath. In fact in the last 30 years of his life, he took bath only twice, once at Kshir Bhawani and another at Chundapora residence in Srinagar when Dal Lake was frozen. It is said that soon after he took bath, there was thaw and the cold wave abated. But even though he did not take bath, his skin usually gave out an aroma. In fact, he had no body consciousness. He used to describe his legs as splinters of wood. He clean shaved his head once a month. The devotees used to massage his body but he would never take bath after the massage. He, however, stopped devotees from doing any massage a year before he left us. He would undertake fasts for months at a stretch. The fasts were not of the ceremonial type, that of missing a meal a day but these involved total abstention from food, except a cup of Kahwa on rare occasions.

In the last two years of his sojourn on the planet earth, he gave enough hints of his decision to give up his gross body. During this period, he did not leave his aasan even to answer the calls of nature. He would remark: "I have now grown old". To a devotee who showed concern at his failing health, he said about one and a half month before the fateful day: Amar Chha Maraan (Do the deathless die?) Again, a few months before his leaving the mortal frame, his biographer and a close devotee, Shri Fotedar, asked him why swelling in his genitals persisted. He replied, "What else is going to happen to this body? It will get shattered piece by piece". Only a few days before his passing away, he remarked: "I should like to go to Kshir Bhawani now". He also said that Dhooni was no more necessary.

Almost on every Sunday, musicians sang till late in the night and he would never ask them to stop. But on his last Sunday on earth, 26th May, '68 he directed the musicians to stop, remarking "we shall not listen to any more music".

Then came May 28, 1968, Tuesday - the day Bhagawaan Gopinath Ji finally chose to cast off his Bhautik Sareera. He went through the morning routine as usual. At about 3 p.m. he directed one of his devotees to give the three Sadhus rupee one each. He had the last few puffs at his Chillum. A devotee started making tea but Bhagawaan Ji said "We shall not take tea any more". He asked for water at 5.30 p.m. And at 5.45 p.m. he uttered OM NAMA SHIVAYA in a low voice, looked around with infinite love towards those present, and closed his eyes. All was over. The revered Nanda Bab mourned the loss by saying that Kashmir had been rocked by an earthquake.

Thus, passed into eternity a great Siddha. He may be no more with us in flesh and blood. But his Spirit continues to guide the ever-increasing number of devotees scattered all over the world. His influence is being felt in even greater measure now.

Nearly a quarter of a century has elapsed since his Nirvana. Yet a mere look at his portrait gives, to the man of faith, the feeling of the presence of a Living Reality. He seems to talk through his lustrous and penetrating eyes. His angelic countenance takes charge of one's afflicted heart, as it were and fills it with inexhaustible bliss. Many a devotee who had never seen him in his life-time, have testified to this mysterious experience.

In his Cosmic form, Bhagawaan Gopinath Ji has been seen to take care of all those who surrender to him, heart and soul. Not bound by the limitations of time and space, Bhagawaan Ji has been munificent in answering sincere prayers anywhere any time. In the words of Swami Yogananda, the celebrated author of "The Autobiography of a Yogi", perfect Masters like Bhagawaan Gopinath Ji "can materialize and dematerialize themselves and move with the velocity of light and utilise the creative light rays in bringing into instant visibility any physical manifestation". According to him, a sage who has merged his consciousness with that of the

Supreme Reality perceives the cosmic essence as light and being free from the three dimensions of space and the fourth one of time, is able to transfer his physical or cosmic form with equal ease through the light rays of earth, water, fire and air.

We are passing through very critical times. Materialism has taken a firm hold over our minds, particularly the young. The moral and spiritual values are on the wane. The need to move from the outer to the inner life, to coordinate the scientific temper and the spiritual approach and to restore the efficacy of our ancient ethical, cultural and spiritual perspectives, has never been greater than now. And in this task, only the saints like Bhagawaan Gopinath Ji can show us the right path, dispel fear in our minds and instill the much-needed faith and love. Bhagawaan Ji has a divine mission to fulfill. He will, we firmly believe, shed light and illumine the dark patches of our aggrieved souls.

Our salutations to this great sage who made Kashmir, nay the entire world, proud.

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19.3 Bhagwaan GopiNath Ji

The Saint Extraordinary

T. N. Dhar

In response to the questions of his enthusiastic devotees and inquisitive seekers about the nature of the self, Ramana Maharshi is reported to have observed: "The state of self-realisation, as we call it, is not attaining something new or reaching some goal which is far away, but simply being that which you always are and which you always have been. All that is needed is that you give up your realization of the not- true as true... The state we call realisation is simply being oneself, not knowing anything or becoming anything. If one has realised, one is that which alone is and which alone has always been." If Bhagwaanji had given discourses or entered into conversation with his devotees on the subject of realizing one's self, he would perhaps have said the same thing, because he was a living embodiment of this vital truth about the state of self-realisation. The narrative of his life, though plain and singularly unspectacular, is a striking illustration of how- through single-minded devotion, rigorous discipline, and iron will, he attained this true state: of being himself.

It is almost unbelievable that a saint of the stature of Bhagwaanji could have lived so near our times which, because of our relentless and unabashed pursuit of material gains, has witnessed a radical transformation in our life styles, reflected most conspicuously in the steady decline of faith and our indifference to the rich spiritual heritage of our land. I am not even sure how many amongst us can share my feelings of regret when I recall that though Bhagwaanji lived right through my school and college days I did not have the good fortune of having his darshan, even touching his feet. For me it will always be a costly miss, an opportunity I did not avail myself of, for does not Kabir say it beautifully: "A pilgrimage is good; To meet a saint is better?" And what better luck could it have been to have met not just a saint, but a saint of saints, a veritable Bhagwaan, for that is what GopiNath Ji was and still is for hundreds and thousands of his devotees, whose tribe has been on the increase?

Bhagwaanji's journey towards sainthood in Kashmir can be understood in its proper perspective as part of a long tradition in the holy valley of rishis, as Kashmir was known in the past, and of the still older tradition of asceticism in India. The way of life in ancient India, which is now generally understood as the Hindu way of life, is perhaps unique in providing a proper and meaningful space for ascetics, sadhus, rishis, and saints within the normal recognizable social framework. For the four- fold varnashrama provided for different stages in an individual's growth

and maturity, through the stages of boyhood, youth, marriage and family life to the last stage, in which he stepped into asceticism. This ideal arrangement balanced social needs and material pursuits, for keeping the race alive and providing for its upkeep and growth, with an individual's quest for spiritual enlightenment and self-realisation. It recognized asceticism as a stage following worldly pleasures and joys towards a state in which, through rigorous detachment, every being learnt to withdraw into himself and work towards his personal salvation.

The most remarkable feature of this arrangement is the clear and realistic focus of the ancient Indians on asceticism: it is something normal, desirable, and within the reach of every person; because of this, it has remained an integral part of our society. As a logical extension of a life of fulfillment, it is not something unusual, i.e., a thing diametrically opposed to social and material goals. However, it did affirm that the ultimate purpose of life was much more than perpetuating the race in material comfort. This consciousness was supposed to have a healthy, salutary effect on the earlier stages of an individual's life, imbuing it with a definite moral purpose and character.

In Kashmir, a slightly altered form of this tradition was the strong tradition of householder-sadhus and saints, of enlightened souls who had attained extraordinary spiritual powers, even while living in recognizable family structures. It survived the onslaughts of the rise of Muslim faith, and made inroads into the spiritual fabric of Islam, by straightening the order of the Sufi saints. I have had the good fortune of knowing quite a few of the householder-saints, who preferred to remain almost unknown. They were extraordinarily gentle, humane, and compassionate beings, who kept the tradition of spirituality alive in Kashmir.

Although the four-fold varnashrama was the standard practice among the Hindus, many people chose to plunge straightaway into the last stage, bypassing the preceding ones of marriage and raising a family. In course of time, this tendency grew further, giving rise to the emergence of another class of saints. Some even held that a person who chooses to be a celibate and leads a life of renunciation right from an early stage is ideally suited to face the rigours of ascetic life.

Within the differing strands of this main tradition, sadhus and saints had enormous freedom to do whatever they thought was right and desirable for attaining their ends. There is hardly any evidence, both literary and archival, in pre-Buddhist times to show that asceticism had a rigid institutionalized character, which could be identified through recognizable orders, monks, standardized practices, training schedules, and rules firmly laid-down. This left people free to choose different modes of worship of the deities of their choice; they were, likewise, free to adopt ascetic practices of their choice involving physical and mental discipline. Even the search for a proper mentor or guru was a part of the saintly quest. This partially accounts for the great variety in the saintly order in India. If we find the emergence and growth of more recognizable kinds of saintly orders in the later periods, it is largely because of the growing influence of Buddhism and Jainism on the Hindu thinking and practices. It is not my intention to go into details concerning the various kinds of saintly orders; I have mentioned this social phenomenon only to show what kind of a saint Bhagwaanji was.

The most striking feature of Bhagwaanji's life is that though he lived hardly a few decades ago, when writing about people of eminence and distinction in any field was quite possible, because documenting lives had already developed into a standard literary practice, we actually know very little about him. In spite of our awareness of the extraordinary spiritual powers he had and of the respect he commanded among people, we have less than adequate knowledge about his personality and the nature of his achievement. All that is available to us is a short and in many respects a very inadequate biography by one of his devotees, the late S. N. Fotedar. A devotee of a long standing, he had known Bhagwaan Ji for over two decades. Also available today are a

few short pieces of reminiscences by some people, which provide descriptive accounts of their meetings with him and also of some miracles that he performed. The biography in particular is more of a chronicle of Bhagwaanji's physical movements in the city of Srinagar than a sustained narrative about his life.

The reasons for the paucity of materials about Bhagwaan Ji do not lie solely with the people who wrote about him; we cannot pin it on the lack of acumen of his biographer or of the people who recorded their impressions about him. They largely inhere in the very nature of his sainthood. He had such a normal and ordinary childhood and youth that nobody could have thought that he would become an eminent saint. In fact, till the time he was in his thirties, he had first a regular job and then ran a small business in a shop, because he needed money to help the members of his joint family. If he resolved not to marry and took interest in visiting holy places, it was not something too unusual. One can cite examples of several house-hold saints of Kashmir who did not marry and did not earn for the families they belonged to. I emphasize these details to establish that Bhagwaanji's early life did not provide any significant clues about the nature of his future life, as one normally finds in the lives of Kabir, Mirabai, or Ramakrishna neither struggle, nor neglect, nor extraordinary visions and fainting spells.

Bhagwaanji's story is too prosaic and ordinary. Compared with the lives of many of the known saints, it has no fire, no striking passion, no flamboyance., which could stimulate people's interest in him. Although he had a well-directed will to seek his Parmeshwar and spent virtually his whole life, more noticeably his years after he gave up active work of all kinds, in pursuit of his goal, he did not do anything out of the ordinary which could attract his attention of people. He undertook no complicated measures, did not do anything risky, did not even move out of his home or place of birth. Even after attaining his goal, he remained steadfast in his endeavour to be a true being. He had no ambition to announce anything to the world, or found a school, or raise a following, or reform the society of his day.

In many respects, Bhagwaanji, though he never became a house-holder in the true sense of the word, is a model of the family-saint. Till it was necessary, he shouldered the responsibility of looking after his kin. After he was free from it, he continued to live with his close relatives. He observed most of the routine social norms, was never choosy about his food or other requirements, and seldom gave any obvious indications of his true state.

Though he maintained links with his family, he stuck to his saadhana. When he concentrated on it with increasing intensity, he became more and more careless about his appearance and living style. Any person seeing him for the first time could hardly take him for the realized soul that he was, for around him one could see only the traditional trapping of commonplace sadhus. He would frequently smoke his chillum and offer ahutis in the dhooni in front of him. Most of the time, he would simply be either lying down or sitting with an abstract look on his face, this was certainly not a very inviting sort of look, which could encourage people to talk to him. This self-absorption became his usual manner in the last years of his life. Though he allowed some of his devotees to press his feet and his legs, which he always thought no better than pieces of wood, he was not much of a talker. Most of the people who sat with him for hours together did not even open their lips, because they always held him in reverential awe. Obviously, Bhagwaanji's mode of saadhana did not make room for discourses, and he spoke no philosophical profundities. He was more of a loner, and too much into himself. His biographer tells us that during the closing years of his life, he spent much of his time in mauna, and hardly ever took food or attended the calls of nature. Although he seldom washed his body, it always looked clean and exuded aroma.

In spite of living through protracted spells of reticence, Bhagwaanji did not cut off his links with people. He was essentially gentle and compassionate and fully alive to the pain and sorrow of

those who came to him for succour. To them he offered solace and help and no intellectual or metaphysical fare. He spoke to them in the language that they could understand, the language of a fellow being and not of a learned pundit. Several people have written about Bhagwaanji's acts of kindness and also about the various ways in which he mitigated their pain. All such acts perceived by the devout as miracles have been recorded systematically by Fotedar in a separate chapter in his book.

Though it is generally believed that true saints do not normally perform miracles, especially those who do not want followers or raise sects, yet most of them do it because that is one of the ways for them to reach out to their fellow beings. Dadu Dayal, a famous family- saint from Rajasthan, has said that a saint is always one with God. And when He deems fit, He automatically takes care of the saint and his devotees in very many special ways, which common people understand as miracles. In his celebrated autobiography, Swami Yogananda has recorded a large number of miracles of several yogis. He maintains that "by the perfection of his surrender to the Prime Healing Power, the master enabled it to flow freely through him." Here Swami Yogananda explains that it is actually God Himself Who performs what are seen as 'miracles' of the Masters that act as His instruments.

Bhagwaanji's miracles of various kinds have been meticulously documented not only by his biographer but also by various other people, whose writings have featured in different issues of the Patrika. That is why there is no need to recount them here. I would only like to emphasize that they were actuated by his love and compassion for the people who came to him with hope. Some of them also illustrate how he came to the rescue of his loved ones during moments of their trial or crisis. Another interesting aspect of his miracles is that they were not concerned only with his desire to help or heal people, but also with his wish to enable them to have a taste of the divine. Several times he is believed to have let some of his chosen devotees to have darshan of the Devi, Sharika Devi of Hari Parbat in particular, right in the midst of their routine surroundings. He would let this happen in a very casual manner, which would catch his devotees off their guard. Often when they missed out on the miracle and their chance of seeing the Devi with attention Bhagwaanji would get into his rare unusual moods: he would be playful, humorous, even mischievous. However, such moments minimized with the passage of time, for during the last phase of his intense saadhana, he was hardly conscious even of his surroundings.

Since Bhagwaanji was one with God even while he lived in this world, he was truly a mystic saint, and his mysticism could be called the "mysticism of personal life." Sudhir Kakar, in his illuminating study of Ramakrishna as a mystic, characterises his mysticism as ecstatic, accompanied by physical movements (such as the postures or mudras associated with the Indian dance). Unlike this, "the mysticism of personal life," according to - Kakar "is not rooted in ecstatic nature, but in a meeting with God in the midst of life's problems and struggles, a meeting experienced at a deep level of faith within normal waking consciousness." This, in my view, aptly describes Bhagwaanji's state as distinguished from Sri Ramakrishna's.

I think that the most remarkable part of Bhagwaanji's achievement is that he makes us see and understand the saintly path in very ordinary and human terms. No adverse circumstances in life pushed him into adopting this path; nor did he show any unusual signs, which could be interpreted as his pre-disposed leanings in this direction. But deep inside him was a strong urge towards it. And he chose to follow this path slowly, steadily, and without any fanfare. He went on intensifying his powers of concentration to such an extent that at one stage he thought of nothing but his Paramatman. Everything he did was within the tried-out, known, and traditional mould, through ways and means which are neither difficult nor unattainable. This makes him into a splendid example of the realized saint, who inspires us more by his example than by his words and actions. The most direct and simple lesson of his life for us is that personal salvation

is a purely individual concern and every human being can and should strive towards it: that each one of us, in spite of our ordinariness, is a potential saint.

Source: Patrika

19.4 Indigo Indian of Mystic East

H. N. Kaul

I am no great believer in men who claim direct liaison with the GOD (emphasis mine). To me all Godmen are fraudmen, whom I dare not touch with a ten-foot-long barge pole.

Naturally, I hit the ceiling when my god-fearing and god-abiding wife asked me, one fine morning, to accompany her to a Godman, wrapping me up with a lot of crape about the supposed miraculous powers of the holy man and the likely material benefits I could get. I may have had a bite at the bait but before she could hook me up for the visit she slipped and that settled it for me. Being mortally afraid of droppers and junkies I put my foot down-and I knew I hurt her-when she told me the Godman was a hash-addict. It was in the winter of 1967- 68, hardly three months after my marriage.

In the summer of 1968, while cooling my heels in Kashmir on a sandwiched holiday, my wife continued her efforts to bring me round to a visit to the holyman and this time I had to thwart a two-pronged attack as my sister-in-law Jai, a committed devotee, had joined forces with my wife. But I was so scared by the mere thought of confronting a junkie that I refused to budge even an inch despite the provocations, temptations and nagging they tried to corner me with. And when it was time for us to say thank you to the vale and dale and tie our shoelaces for the return journey to our joint in Delhi, it happened. My wife trooped in, with puffed cheeks and blood-shot eyes, a picture of misery and grief and broke down: "He's left us."

And to my sympathetic enquiries she cleared the riddle amid sobs. The Godman was dead.

"Good riddance", I thought, and felt a surge of relief through me. But to show my concern for her grief I presented her my sympathies rolled in butter. I even volunteered to pay my homage to the saint by joining his funeral procession. This was great comfort to her and I had nothing to be scared of. "Who is afraid of the dead - even dead junkies.

I kept my word and was at the spot on the dot. But I was stunned to see the size of the crowd - a funeral crowd any national leader would have envied. And what struck me most was the devotion of the people more than their grief. They said their grief with rose petals and tears.

For some time curiosity welled up in me to know why so many sane people were drawn to a dope but the bustle of hectic life in Delhi, put the lid down on my inquisitiveness and I parked the thought of Godman in the closed shelf of my brain and forgot about him the way I forget all the trifles that cross my way.

But it was not to be so. One day when I returned back from my work very late, tired to the bones and ready to hit the sack, I failed to recognize my bedroom. A Godrej-size cane-rack had pushed the yacht-size bed to the corner and string of coloured bulbs had given the room a festive look. My wife, in lotus posture, eyes closed and string of beads in her hand was seated like a statue in front of the rack. I nudged forward and looked into the rack. An old man in typical Kashmiri Brahminical attire was staring at me from within the rack. He was supporting a six tier Muslim turban and wearing a 'pheran'. He was deeply drawing at his 'chellum' with the tongue of a flame licking his broad and furrowed brow and his luminous eyes were penetrating through me like X-ray. For a few minutes I could not take my eyes off him. It was an impressive photograph in a chrome frame.

I jerked my wife out of her reveries. She promptly introduced me to the Godman, pointing an enthusiastic finger at the photograph and she kissed the locket, with another mini-portrait of the saint studded in it, with reverence. And so the Godman, despite my apparent disliking, started staying with me right in my bedroom and in the heart of my wife. And I had to stay with him to compromise peace at home. I had my misgivings as I thought the ghost of the saint in my bedroom will be standing like a ten-foot-tall concrete wall between me and my wife. But it was not so. I managed peaceful co-existence with the godman.

Satya Sai Baba, a south Indian Godman with a liberal crop of Negroid hair that shaded his head like an umbrella was the most sought- after Godman those days and I decided to cash on his popularity to make a fast buck and steady my fast declining bank blue. Somehow, I managed to gatecrash and got an audience with the saint and wrote a 50 page sketch of my impressions. The booklet was sold before it hit the stalls. Though it fattened my bank-roll a bit, it did not make me any wiser about Godmen and I continued to love Godmen like plague. Then two small happenings softened me a bit and I began to waver but, yet, I was not fully sold to the idea.

I prize two things in life: my son Ashish and my liquor. One day Ashish suddenly doubled up in pain and his yelps and shrieks were piercing through my heart like lances. It was midnight and I was trying to ring my doctor out of his slumber when my wife brought Ashish to me, parked him in my lap, opened a rusty tin box, scooped up a pinch of ash and put it in the crying child's mouth. Suddenly like a taut wire let loose at both ends, the child's stiffness vanished and he calmed down. Within five minutes he was his giggling self again with no pain or sickness. I smiled through misty eyes in utter disbelief: How could a pinch of ash calm a child, who seemed dangerously ill? This was the poser that was raising its hood like a cobra in my mind and biting into my convictions. I had a mind to get the ash chemically examined but gave up the idea lest it may lose its healing touch for Ashish. Since then a pinch of holy ash is the first medicine we try on Ashish whenever he gets ill. Dr. Arya's regular visits for check-up are of course there but we have not taken the child specialist into our confidence about our potent drug. I might have been shaken in my convictions a bit but I was still unconvinced.

Doctors had advised me to cut down my liquor as my liver had lost its potency to keep track with my intake. Like all good things in life, I stubbornly disagreed with the advice and fell like a pole axe. I was not bothered much about the liver but the pain was unbearable and I had started living on pethidine shots and mandril tablets. But it was a temporary relief and I was not getting well. My guts were in mess. Touched by my plight, my wife tried her williest best to persuade me to swallow a pinch of the holy ash-she has a swell stock of the ash- but firstly because of the pride of my convictions and secondly because I never wanted her to score over me, I brushed her aside. I was writhing with pain but would not give up.

I was itching for a smoke and pleaded with my wife for a fag, despite doctor's strict warning. It was one in a hundred chance, if I know my wife as I should, expecting the usual harangue of: "liquor and cigarettes are poison to you", I was pleasantly surprised when she readily gave me a butt of a Charminar, she dug out from the folds of her purse. Though my brand is different and I don't relish butts but being off the fag for over a week I readily accepted her generosity and hungrily puffed the-life out of the butt. I felt a surge of relief passing through my body. It was all balm, blue and Sunny. I felt like a king lighter, happier and better. A fag after three days is just like posting maiden kiss on the lips of love and with these pleasant thoughts I slipped into deep slumber after five days of agony and tossing about in the bed. And when I came out of it my wife attributed my miraculous escape from the clutches of death not to the liver-extract and terramycine and the hundreds of tablets and capsules I had consumed but to the healing touch of "Bhagwaanji"-her Godman.

"How does your Bhagwaanji come in?" I asked partly in anger and partly in surprise.

"The half-smoked Charminar was Bhagwaanji's" she told me and showed me scores of half smoked cigarettes in her purse.

I decided to find out more about her "Bhagwaanji", whom she had now made the honorary physician in absentia of us both, me and my son Ashish. And my quest began in right earnest.

Indians seeped in deep superstition have elevated thousands of mortals to the status of Godhood all through the ages and this tradition of creating halo of Godhood around men and women has continued to this day. And it is the unflinching faith of the devotees more than the miracles of these Godmen that have made them great. Grapevine in India is the most effective medium of circulation. While the few among thousands of such Godmen have circulated all over the country, many more despite better achievements have remained obscure. At least fame is not all that Godly. And GopiNath Ji Bhan, whom his devotees identify with the God, or at least with the God's closest circle has not reached all over the country like Satya Sai baba or all over the globe like jet-age Swami Maharishi Mahesh yogi, the once spiritual head of Mia Farrow and Beatles. Except within his own community in Kashmir and a few individuals outside the state, he has not been in the spotlight despite being spiritually more robust and miracle-wise more stunning.

Naryana Bhan was a man sold out to the idea of God and the devoted most of his time in pursuit of a chance meeting with the Almighty. But worldly-wise, he knew spiritualism was no substitute for a square meal and hence did business in pashmina wool. And like every good Kashmiri Brahmin, his spiritual pursuits did not prevent him from marrying and raising good many children. He married Hara Mali, who her father believed was the incarnation of Goddess Ragyina - the deity who relishes milk. And GopiNath Ji Bhan was born off the conjugal explosion of the two spiritual sparks. He was the second of three brothers and two sisters. Naryana Bhan bequeathed property to his stepmother and spiritual legacy to his son. Some father!

GopiNath Ji cried his arrival on July 3, 1908 in his ancestral house at Banamohalla, in the heart of Srinagar. But the family had to shuttle around thanks to the liberal attitude of Narayan Bhan.

GopiNath Ji was not averse to studies and passed middle. He lost his mother at the tender age of 12 and started earning his bread and butter at the age of 16 as a compositor. But born free, he shook off the shackles of subordination and opened a grocery shop. He carried on for ten years but then gave up.

He churned the gist out of scriptures and showed special preference for Gita and Vedas. Most of the time he remained within than without. No one, not even his biographer, Mr. S.N. Fotedar are sure about his Guru. Some say it was his father who initiated him into the realm of mystic while some others feel it was the holyman Balak Kaw but the majority opinion is that Zana Kak Tufchi, a local Godman should be credited with this honour.

Reason: GopiNath Ji attended the anniversary function of Tufchi religiously and even cleansed dirty pots at the function. Few of the staunchest followers believe that he was his own 'Guru' and got the word direct from the 'God'.

Guru or no Guru, GopiNath Ji knew the ropes and rose high in the coterie of local Godmen. He was so high in the estimation of his devotees that they started calling him "Bhagwaanji"-The God. Never before in the history of Kashmir has a mortal been elevated so high.

First it was deep study of scriptures, then brooding concentration to unfold the self, then visits to shrines, then burning ambers and pulls at the hashish-chellum. Step by step he climbed up and a few who saw in him the saviour, clung to his apron strings. He neither offered help nor shrugged them off but sustained their faith with a miracle now and then. The cult spread, his

devotees had found a Messiah and they entombed him at Kharyar, a comparatively unknown temple in Srinagar. The faith spread, so did the devotees multiply and those who had not seen him in his mortal form did draw inspiration from his life-like statue. Faith, they say, is a horse, you can ride when in distress.

What miracles? Many devotees come forward with tales of the powers of this holyman. They are men and women whom it is very difficult to disbelieve. He showed many devotees, including Pt. Nila Kaul, Goddess Sharika in human form. Sixty people were served tummyful of lunch prepared for six souls. He predicted wars with the accuracy of the minute. He healed those given up by the best brains in medicine. He read thoughts, both wicked and noble, like an openbook. He was here, there and everywhere at the same time and many sane people vouch for it. His commitment was total. He gave everything without asking anything in return. He shunned publicity and abhorred fame. He carried his laurels with indifference. He was a Godman but never said so.

A piece of mind. Anniversaries, holy fires, books and pamphlets, 'Bhajans' and Kirtans are good. They keep the clan bonds strong. But look beyond the statue of the great man, untie the knots of talisman and don't freeze him in stone. It is polluting not honouring. Let the Indigo Indian spread the fragrance of mystic east for all to smell and refresh. Open the portals of Kharyar for the world to see that God is a man at his best.

Source: Patrika

19.5 Bhagawaan Ji After 1968

Shri S. N. Fotedar



Bhagawaan Gopinath ji

Association with a Saint or even a mere touch or a single glance from him can transform a man and make him Divine. His heart is full of universal compassion and he works ceaselessly for redeeming suffering souls from ignorance. He guides them to a life of joy, freedom and immortality. The Saint is verily God in flesh and blood.

During the present century one such saint of exalted dimensions was Bhagawaan Gopinath Ji of Kashmir, who graced not only the sacred soil of Kashmir where he was born and lived (1898-1968) but also played his part in the spiritual upliftment of India, though he had never moved out of Kashmir in his physical body.

The people of Kashmir had the good sense to realize this in his life time, they gave him the name Bhagawaan while he was still in his earthly existence, a unique phenomenon indeed. Such is a rare saint for whom a monument is raised and relics enshrined. In his Ashram at Kharyar, Srinagar, where his marble statue has been installed, regular Aarti is held everyday. His Mahanirvana and Jayanti festivals are observed every year, where a Yagnya performed on the former occasion and a Sadhu Bhandar and prayers are offered on the latter. A Trust (Regd) has been organised for maintenance of the institution and other activities for spreading of Bhagawaan Ji's message of universal love and brotherhood. The aim is to awaken a higher level of consciousness amongst the masses. This is styled as "Bhagawaan Consciousness" by his Australian devotees. Attempt is made to develop this consciousness for the betterment of the whole world.

Since it is not possible to give an exhaustive picture of Bhagawaan Ji's life, sadhna and his other manifold activities in a small article, I shall confine myself to give a brief sketch of his life.

Bhagawaan Gopinath Ji was born in 1898 A.D. at Bana Mohalla, Srinagar. His revered father Pandit Narayan Joo Bhan was a Pushmina Merchant and a man of liberal mind, Bhagawaan Ji's pious mother Smt. Har-Mali was the daughter of Pandit Prasad Joo Parimu, a mystic saint popularly known as "Zad-Bharata". In a vision at Khir Bhawani the Divine Mother had told him that she would be taking birth in his house and thus the blessed girl (Haramal) was born, who later got Bhagawaan Ji in her lap. On account of strained family circumstances, Bhagawaan Ji had a very troubled time in his early days. He had to give up his studies after passing the middle school examination.

He had studied Sanskrit, Persian and other languages but all along he was detached, attending to 'Rasilas' and other Bhajan Mandalis and also visiting saints usually. He would sip at all cups but drain none.

From his early boyhood he had started going to Sharika Bhagawati Shrine at Hari Parvat, Srinagar. It became routine for him to circum-ambulate the hill every day. When his age was about 25 years he was blessed with Darshan of Sharika Bhagwati. He did not rest at that but aspired for attaining perfection. He girded up his loins and plunged himself headlong into intense sadhana for exploring all the aspects of the Divine Reality and gaining mastery over Tattwas, with no hold barred and with scant attention to his body welfare. This process was the same as Swami Ram Krishna Parmahansa had adopted after having Sakshatkar of Maha-Kali. For some time he continued to live with mundane affairs which gradually waned off and later he took no interest in such matters whatsoever.

The most crucial period of his Sadhana, a do-or-die effort, was while he was residing at Rangteng in Srinagar (1929-36). He lay stretched on a bed all the 24 hours of a day, absorbed in the Supreme with a small wick lamp kept lighted. He would sometimes fast for months together and sometimes take large quantities of food at a time. His body got swollen. He at times spit large quantities of blood. A rat had bored a hole in one of his heels and he did not seem to be conscious of it. On occasions he would eat handfuls of Datura and other lethal intoxicants. The Sadhana continued for about 7 years after which he emerged a radiant soul but with a battered body. His 'Chelum smoking' continued to be his constant companion from an early age to the day he gave up his mortal coil.

Questioned why he was fasting so often he said, "that he was taking tons of energy through his puffs (smoking) and food was not necessary. "

After this Sadhana of 7 years, came to be recognized as a great saint and he began his saintly mission of improving the lot of humanity and allaying the distress of people who called on him

for succour and hope. He even started helping sadhus and other people monetarily and the practice continued till the end of his days in this physical world.

After attainment of perfection he had, in pursuit of his mission, to contend with opposing immical forces which, left to themselves would have harmed our country. He had to exert a lot, to keep these forces in check. On some occasions, you would find him like Aghura with flaming eyes rivetted upwards, parched and foaming lips, fasting, refusing to take water even but addressing some invisible forces. To what extent he was successful in taming those forces is known to all. One wonders at his unrelenting efforts, his determination of not yielding to dark forces, for a number of years with scant attention to his Physical comforts. Such a great saint, with such endurance is really a God and Bhagawaan Ji displayed this.

He seemed always in tune with the infinite and used to come down from a higher plane of consciousness in response to requests and appeals made by devotees and that too for a few moments only. He started the practice of giving Ahutes, after the year 1936 in the first instance into his fire pot (Kangdi) and later into an Iron Sekdi and then offerings in Dhuni continued till the end.

Saints do not live in their outer actions. It is not possible to speak of the inner Sadhana of Bhagawaan Ji which is a closed book. It is possible however, to give an account of his Sadhana as seen by common people in diverse fields and disciplines.

It is apparent that few saints like Bhagawaan Ji emerged from the sacred soil of Kashmir during the last three or four centuries or so, became so active in their spiritual realms. They either seem to be spent up or have gone to higher unfathomable realms and we have to depend solely on the divine protection of the Spiritual colossus Bhagawaan Gopinath Ji, not only for succor but also for effectively combating the satanic forces, bound on destruction of our culture and personality.

I smell and visualise that the decade of nineties will be a period of great test for the lovers of Bhagawaan Ji. They have to strengthen the spiritual exercise, be engrossed in Bhagawaan Ji's worship through bhajans, meditation, and offerings. Dark clouds are roaming but have to vanish. Bhagwaan Ji is active in the subtle plane we have to develop the attitude to present ourself before Him. All the Ashramities have to undergo strenuous Sadhana to get in tune with Bhagawaan Consciousness. I have faith in Pran Nath Ji to hold the internal front and Chrungoo Sahib for the external, because the swallon ranks of devotees need guidance.

Bhagawaan Ji's very presence is not doubtful. Saints are heelers, masters and Spiritual guides. They seek disciples and hunt for them so that the chord is framed between masters and aspirants Gurus and Shishyas. He knew his sphere.

One day Bhagawaan Ji had to face for a photograph and some close associates wanted to be included, but he disallowed that. There was some annoyance. Next day Bhagawaan Ji very patiently explained, "This photograph has to go to far corners, that is why I wanted it to be so". Today when thirteen years have passed we have been seeing that Bhagawaan Ji's photograph has reached every home. It is placed in Pooja rooms and Ashrams, that are coming up. The aura of spiritual and mental shelter has spread so wide and far that Bhagawaan Ji's "Parivar" has passed all the geographical boundaries. Devotees have taken him to Australia, New Zealand, Japan and other parts of India. Bhagawaan Ji has been in gracious for those who need Him and for those whom he needs.

In 1975, Justice S.N. Katju a Sadhaka practising shakti worship was in a difficult and there was some conflict in his mind about his sadhana. Bhagawaan Ji appeared in a vision to him and said, "Your Gurdeva and I are one, and you have now been put under my care for carrying out the mission of the masters, What you are doing under the guidance of Papaji was all chalked

out by me and your Gurdeva together". Katju said, he spoke in Kashmiri, what I needed. Then he slowly faded out of my vision and I opened my eyes; How keen Bhagawaan Ji is for spiritual seekers.

In Feb, 1975 Philip Simpfendorfer an Australian Bhakta had come on Kashmir yatra with some friends. He alongwith his friends had come to see the writer and his problem was about the mission and message for him from Bhagawaan Ji. The writer said, "Mr Philip, do you remember how Bhagawaan Ji accepted your request when your daughter was to be married". "Yes every detail of that day", said Philip, "It was Saturday when my daughter Helen was to marry Peter. From Friday it started raining, I went into my room and prayed before Bhagawaan Ji, asking to take care of happiness of the children, give sunshine for the outdoor wedding function. The miracle happened clouds got rolled, bright sunshine appeared till function was over and by evening again clouds came, but it did not rain. I was happy how Bhagawaan Ji helps when, we are in complete obedience."

"Again, it was 15th of Feb. 1978 while in full concentration and meditation I met him in a very awakened state." He said, "For the guidance of humanity we seek people in every land, strengthen their faith. They fight against the dark ocean of destruction. We guided when there was no religion, we do not interfere with religion. Well being of the world and spirituality of man is the goal". "My Mission and goal was made clear", said Philip.

Source: **Patrika**

19.6 Immortal Bhagawaan Ji

Philip Simpfendorfer, Australia

The vision of Paradise became strong for me when I made my home in a cave near the Bargo River NSW for four months during my midlife crisis. I felt impelled to find my nature in the context of nature, because I realised that I did not know the essence of either. What I discovered was a reality different from what I had experienced in society or in my inner world of spiritual power. Not knowing what I lacked, I felt I had to abandon my spirituality and somehow live in the ISNESS of myself and everything else.

After four months I went to the Weston Plains where I lived with the sun and the stars for two years. I still went about my daily work, experiencing it as a respite from the strange, overwhelming dynamic attitude within me. It was not until I stayed two months in a Balinese village that I felt I had met a culture that embodied the dimensions I experienced within environment and cosmos.

At Amarnath Cave in Kashmir in 1976, a voice spoke to me as I stood before the ice stalagmite within the cave. I was thinking that the only request I could make was that God continued to look after me. The voice said, "Don't you trust me.?" A similar voice spoke to me from Kashmir 18 months later and said words to the effect that the well-being of the world depend on the interconnection of anchorages and sites of power across the globe. It was not as simple stated as that because it was Bhagawaan Gopinath Ji communicating unfamiliar concepts to me from the astral level. The Saint had left his mortal coil in 1968 and it was no surprise to his devotees that he was in my room speaking to me in English - it was within the pattern of his behaviour before and after his death.

Bhagawaan Ji was beyond religious categories, but he did spend a lot of time at certain sacred springs and rocks associated with various Devine Energies, i.e., the immanent, feminine aspect of transcendence. Contact with him did not violate my freedom. He did not say I had to do anything. But in 1979 I invited around 20 friends to camp in the bush for the weekend. The

purpose was to be aware of our inward being and the energies of environment as one, if possible. Since then on the first Sunday of each month people link in meditation with sacred sites in different countries of the world to strengthen Earth's network of light. The first Sunday is now called 'Sacred Earth Sunday'.

Probably the idea of harmonious human society came first to the Himalayan area in the age of Gemini and blossomed in the Age of Taurus. Its centre could easily have been Mt. Kailas in Tibet . Certainly the human collective memory of paradise on earth alludes to this area. The belief in the four rivers flowing from paradise could be the memory of the four rivers that rise in the Kailas region. As late as the Middle Ages in Europe, paradise was somewhere located between India & China. During the earlier ages, though the work of great Himalayan ascetics (or people who came from the stars, if A Hopi Prophecy is correct). 1995 The new race of humans will begin to design their new reality of life on this planet as they intended it to be when they came from the stars. (A Hopi Prophecy).

The harmony of heaven began to permeate human social groups causing animal and instinctive traits to yield to human spiritual consciousness. The Indian word 'Bhagawaan' is sometimes simply translated as 'Lord' or 'God'. In K.N. Dhar's book, 'Bhagawaan Gopinath Ji of Kashmir Vol. II.' There is a quote from Kalika Purana defining "Bhaga" as 'unmitigated sovereignty over temporal and subliminal powers, religious and moral merit, undiminished glory, graceful lustre, perceptive Knowledge and discernment'.

Like the Fisher Kings father in the Grail Story, a Bhagawaan does not live as a person bound by spiritual and physical realities. By his sovereignty over temporal and eternal energies he brings in all qualities necessary for a strong and happy society cemented by love and abundance.

He is lord of the sites in his region. The last great person in this Bhagawaan tradition was Bhagawaan Gopinath Ji who during the mid decades of the 20th century took spiritual responsibility for Kashmir during the time of acute threat. The Bhagawaan energy broods over Glastonbell (Glastonbell, NSW Australia is 410 acres of bushland, a garden of delight, a great landscape and temple managed by a non-profit association - a big Ashram in true sense.) waiting for a building that resonates with the harmony of the sun, the moon, the earth and universal brotherhood, when built, its spiritual energy will probably relate to Mt. Kailas.

The 'Renewal' movement in part grow out of Australian involvement with the enigmatic Kashmir saint Bhagawaan Gopinath Ji. As the saint Gopinath Ji said little and spent his time weaving strong positive spiritual energies into both the Elemental forces, and the doings of people. In a sense Glastonbell, and occasionally the people in it, are Gopinath Ji's Australian focal point.

Bhagawaan Gopinath Ji was a celibate, he belonged to no religious order. Staying mostly in a room of a relative or in a hut at a sacred site, he lived in extreme introversion. His teaching sessions were limited to a few sentences. Often he would awaken necessary insight in people with a touch or a glance or sometimes like a Zen Master, with a blow. Miracles constantly happened around him. For the enlightenment of others he sometimes caused goddess or sages to appear physically. His goddess was a rock site on the hill of Hari Parbat in the centre of Kashmir valley, called Sharika, the Universal Mother.

Born Gopinath Bhan, he was the only Kashmiri given the title 'Bhagawaan' (Glorious Lord). Once he commented that a yogi may get realisation of God, but an introvert can get realisation of all aspects of God. God in the Kashmir Shiva - Shakti spirituality is like an infinite ocean of consciousness consisting of every possible vibration even material objects.

Bhagawaan Ji's mastery over the varied manifestation of God was recognised by his awed devotees. Visiting sadhus, wandering from sacred site to sacred site, visiting the holy men of India would comment that they knew of no other so fully absorbed in the infinite. His method

consisted in emitting vibrations from various organs of his body in tune with the universal cosmic vibrations. In this way he was able to enter the realm of subtle thought that pervades the world and influences the world consciousness.

Six weeks before he died he said, "Amar chha maran"(Does an immortal die?) to a disciple who was merely thinking about Bhagawaan Ji's impending death.

On 15-2-78 I met him in a very awakened state and the following is a part of the conversation as recorded a few hours later. .

"---- Have you not heard of the guides of Humanity ? On every land we seek people who will stand like an immovable rock against the dark ocean of destruction. We would like ashrams linked with places of power and linked throughout the world."

These may not have been the precise words as I was confused by the visitation. I asked, "Are you Bhagawaan Ji,"?

"Will you make limitations? if not, that is true. "

"Do you have a religion? What are your religious beliefs?"

"We guided when there was no system of religions. We do not interfere with religions. We want the well being of the world. If men make patterns of belief, it is their concern. Our guidance is to make circles of light and love for the well being of Earth.

"Will the present patterns of human life go on?"

"But the circles remain."

Source: Patrika

19.7 Remembering Bhagwaan Ji

Prof. A. N. Dhar

Bhagawaan Gopinath Ji attained Mahasamadhi in 1968. since then his renown as an eminent saint has spread far and wide. The number of his devotees and followers has swelled considerably during the past 2-3 decades. In consequence, Bhagawaan Gopinath Ji centres have sprung up at several places in India in addition to the main centre at Srinagar one centre has been established in N. S. W. Australia. The present Ashram at Udaiwala, Jammu, that came up in the wake of the outbreak of militancy in Kashmir, has turned into a busy spiritual centre where regular prayer meetings devoted to Bhagawaan Ji are held on all week days. Besides, Yajnyas are performed periodically at this centre and the birthday of Bhagawaan Ji is celebrated with great fervour and devotion annually here. In fact, it is noteworthy that all the centres are managed and run efficiently, thanks to the orderly manner in which a disciplined and dedicated band of Bhagawaan Ji's followers is seen to handle congregations and conduct proceedings at each centre.

I remember having seen the Bhagawaan on some festive occasions at Khir Bhavani and also several times at his Chandapora residence in Srinagar in the fifties (when I was a young man in my twenties).

Whenever I observed this great saint, what impressed me deeply about him was his total absorption in divine contemplation - that a true seeker could immediately perceive. One had to lend one's ears keenly to the words he sometimes mumbled to get at what they actually conveyed. Once, in my very presence, Bhagawaan Ji almost whispered some meaningful words into the ears of my friend, Sh. Triloki Nath Dhar, and then made an offering into the dhooni that was there in front of him. As I gathered from my friend later, Bhagawaan Ji had spoken of his

own exalted state of consciousness, what: in mystical parlance could be described as Unitive Experience, I, myself, had an 'encounter of a different sort with Bhagawaan Ji, which I still shudder to recall (though the experience, in effect, turned out to be auspicious for me). I saw the saint last at his Chandapora residence in 1961 purposefully to seek his blessings. Something about me was perhaps not liked by Bhagawaan Ji. This became evident when he spoke some harsh words to me, making me leave the room in an agitated state of mind. Within a couple of days of this seemingly 'unpleasant' encounter, I got the job I had applied for a Lectureship in English, which I held at the start of my teaching career. Obviously, the Bhagawaan's 'anger' proved to be a blessing for me.

In attempting the present article on Bhagawaan Gopinath Ji, I am acutely conscious of two handicaps - my first handicap is that I have not had the advantage of knowing this saint closely as a disciple nor as a devotee who paid regular visits to his residence. The other handicap is that my own knowledge of authentic facts relating to Bhagawaan Ji's life and teachings is scanty, far less than what one can glean from the two sequential studies published by Bhagawaan Gopinath Ji Trust - the biographical study by the late Sh. S. N. Fotedar and the volume bearing the sub-title 'The Saint of All Times' by the late Professor K. N. Dhar. Shri Fotedar's work is a well-documented study, offering a lucid account of the life and teachings of Bhagawaan Ji. It is replete with authentic facts, in terms of dates and events, concerning the life of the saint. Analytical and critical in his approach (aiming at objectivity in spite of his devotional fervour), the author has arrived at sound conclusions regarding the spiritual attainments and eminence of Bhagawaan Ji. Professor K. N. Dhar's volume is a useful sequel to Shri Fotedar's biographical study. It sheds further light on the important observations and statements made in the earlier work. The author has attempted to provide illustrative support from relevant scriptures (bearing on Vedanta and Shaivism) to the findings and conclusions of Shri Fotedar. The concluding section of the book, titled 'Exchange of Notes', is revealing. On going through the letters exchanged, among others, mostly between Mr. Philip Simpfendorfer and Shri Pran Nath Koul, Secretary Bhagawan Ji Trust, the reader realizes how 'Bhagawaan consciousness' has grown and spread beyond India, 'touching' and influencing devotees in far off places like Australia, where Bhagawaan Ji's Australian devotees have established the centre mentioned earlier.

Having touched briefly on the two studies brought out by Bhagawaan Gopinath Ji Trust, I should like to elaborate a few points that I gathered from Shri Fotedar's work. I shall deal with them one by one:

i) The question of who actually was Bhagawaan Ji's Guru has been discussed at some length by Shri Fotedar. After thorough investigations - all controversies settled - he has come to the conclusion that Swami Zanakak Tupchi was his Guru. However, the author mentions Bhagawaan Ji himself as having conveyed, in response to a disciple's query, that he considered the Gita as his Guru. At the same time, we know on authority that Bhagawaan Ji was fond of the Guru Gita. Understandably, he prized it because his Guru, Swami Zanakak Tupchi, had prescribed its study for his disciples. And this work indisputably attaches utmost importance to the Guru (as a person). The only conclusion we can draw from this apparent divergence is that while the Guru's grace is indispensable, the seeker has to assimilate his Guru's teaching through self-effort. The Guru's anugraha and the seeker's purushartha are complementary in character.

ii) Bhagawaan Ji led a celebrate life, yet he continued to live in grahasta and performed agnihotra as a ritual in earnest throughout his life. He never donned the yellow robe and did not preach or practise vegetarianism. Nor did he preach any orthodox doctrine but spent all his time in Sadhana. All this could lead one to the conclusion that Bhagawaan Ji was in line with the tradition of Kashmiri saints who were at once Shaktas and Saivites, who wouldn't make a

distinction between 'Siva' and 'Kesava', who never thought high of external sanyasa but emphasized inward purity and discipline.

iii) Bhagawaan Ji was a great Siddha and used his spiritual powers for the welfare of mankind. He performed miracles to alleviate the suffering of bhaktas and to help those who were in distress. As a tattava jnani, the Bhagawaan emphasized self analysis and introspection. Ample evidence is available to suggest that he continues to guide spiritual seekers and events as Jagat Guru.

iv) He was an institution in himself, an accomplished Master who could initiate the seeker through a glance, a gesture or a puff from his chellum. As a spiritual genius, he evolved his techniques to awaken 'Bhagawaan Consciousness'.

v) Bhagawaan Ji was accessible to all and gave liberally of his spiritual bounty, taking, of course, into account the receptive capacity of each seeker. His impact on a large number of spiritual seekers has been phenomenal, explaining his pervasive influence in this country and abroad.

May Bhagawaan Ji's grace descend on all of us in this hour of crisis and deliver us safe across the perilous ocean of samsara.

Source: Patrika

19.8 Jagadguru Bhagwaan Gopinath Ji

Professor J. N. Sharma

Jagadguru Bhagwaan Gopinath Ji was one of the most eminent saints who have ever graced the sacred land of India. Unlike the other saints, he was called Bhagwaan in his lifetime as all the six attributes which that word stands for were seen in him. He was a jeevanmukta, having attained mukti or liberation while still in the gross body, to which he was not attached in the least. His spiritual state was what the Shaivites call Shaambhavi avasthaa (the state of Shiva Himself) and the Vendandns, Brahmisthiti (the state of ever dwelling in Brahman, or God without a form).

With his spiritual power, he did a lot of good to spiritual aspirants, house-holders and the country. He had a peculiar way of bringing sinners around to the path of virtue. Though utterly detached, he, in his later life, showed much concern for the country and its people. Now, according to S.N. Fotedar, his biographer and one of his senior disciples, he also exercises a beneficent influence on the modern age and its concepts.

Gopinath, one of the several brothers and sisters, was born in a middle-class Kashmiri Pandit family at Banamohalla, Srinagar, Kashmir on 3rd July, 1898. His mother, Shrimad Haara-Maali, passed away when he was only twelve, and his father, Pandit Narayan Joo Bhan, when he (Bhagwaan Ji) was in his late twenties.

Gopinath was educated only up to the Middle Standard, but had absorbed well whatever he had been taught at school. He would very rarely, though utter beautiful English sentences even in later life, when he used to be absorbed in the Self most of the time. He was also conversant with Sanskrit, Persian, Hindi and Urdu.

When Gopinath was only 10, Pandit Narayan Joo Bhan relinquished the possession of his residential house, along with most other belongings, to his step-mother. The family continued to live in Srinagar, but had to shift residence from place to place. Thus, Bhagwaanji lived in 11 different houses, besides his ancestral house. These included the house of a niece of his at Chondapora where he gave up the mortal frame on 28h May.

The family being in dire financial strains Gopinath was asked to take up some work so at the young age of about 15 or 16, he started working at a local printing press as a compositor. He, however, gave up that job after three years. In his 20, he ran a grocer's shop, here he seemed to be generally absent-minded, being absorbed in meditation. The family pressed him to marry, hoping that marriage would bind him to the world, and so he would be a permanent financial support, but he was adamant in his refusal.

As a young man, Gopinath stood out for his bravery, fearlessness and hatred of dishonesty. Another notable feature of his youth was his longing to visit the great saints of that time. The ones he visited included Swami Baalak Kaw, popularly known as Baalji, Swami Jeewan Saheb and Swami Zana Kak Tufchi, Gopinath remained a celibate all his life.

He regarded lust as the greatest obstacle to self-realisation. Here is an incident worth mentioning in this connection. Some friends once forced the young Gopinath to visit a courtesan, along with themselves. At the very sight of her, he felt such a revulsion that he called her a witch and reprimanded her in very harsh language. Then, he advised, her to live a virtuous life. However, thinking that poverty must have forced her to take to a sinful life, he in his characteristically compassionate manner, threw a rupee-coin towards her before leaving her room.

His hatred of lust was noticed throughout his later life as well. Once, among the many visitors, there was a woman sitting before him. At the very sight of her, he started beating her with his long iron tongs, and chased her away. Returning to his seat, he told the others that the unchaste woman had visited two friends that morning, and then had come to him steeped in sin.

He felt happy whenever a devotee came to see him though he never asked a house-holder disciple or devotee to give up his wife and children in pursuit of Self-realisation.

Bhagwaan was above all considerations of caste, creed and nationality. From 1947 onwards, the people of all creeds would go to see him and he would shower his love and compassion equally on all. Once he said, in answer to a devotee's question. Is Hindu one and Muslim another?

Unmistakable spiritual leanings were discernible in the child Gopinath from the early year of seven or eight. That he visited some great saints in his youth. Most probably, he did so to find out a guru who would initiate him formally. It was not generally known who his guru was. However, much investigative work was done in this regard by Sh. S.N. Fotedar. One piece of irrefutable evidence on which he based his conclusion that the great saint Swami Zana Kak Tufchi was Bhagwaanji's guru is that it was confirmed by Pt Baal Ji Wangnoo, the younger brother of Swami Aftaab Joo Wangnoo, Bhagwaan Ji's senior co-disciple.

Bhagwaanji started with the spiritual discipline known as Panchaanga-upaasanaa, that is, meditating on the five deities, Ganesha, Surya, Narayana, Shiva and Shakti. Later, his ideal was the Divine Mother Shaarika, whose vision he had, for the first time, at the age of 27. Gradually, he shifted to nirguna-upaasanaa, that is, meditating on the Supreme Reality without a form. His interest in worldly affairs, including domestic matters, dwindled till in the early thirties, he took to intense saadhanaa: (spiritual discipline), shutting himself up in a room, which no one, except mostly his, was to enter. An earthenware lamp was kept burning there all the 24 hours. He did not allow even the room to be swept. His concentration was so intense and he grew so unaware of his body that a rat nibbled a hole in a heel of his. It is not possible to say what type of spiritual discipline it was, but it caused his body to swell and made him vomit blood, sometimes. During this seven-year period of saadhanaa, he would take no food for long periods extending even to six months. Sometimes, however, he would take food in very large quantities.

He came out of this terrible ordeal with the full realisation of the Supreme Reality.

In his later years, Bhagwaanji took to another type of spiritual practice. He would emit vibrations from some parts of his body, e.g. the knees and the intestines, and through his chillum smoking. The vibrations seem to have been in tune with (to-us, mysterious) cosmic vibrations.

Bhagwaanji kept a dhooni(sacred fire) burning before him and offered oblations into it off and on. He continued with this practice even while he stayed at some holy shrines in, or outside, Srinagar.

Ekam Sat vipraah bahudhaa vadanti (The Reality is one but the wise call it variously), so says the Rig Veda. The paths leading to It are also various. Having realised the Reality, Bhagwaanji respected all these paths. He defied categorisation as a Shaiva, a Shaakta a Vaishnava, a Vedaantin, and so on. Discerning people could find the characteristics of all these in him. He uttered 'Aum namah Shivaaya ' at the time of giving up the gross body, and yet a copy of the Bhagavadgita (a vadantic text, which also he regarded as a guru) used to be always by his side. Calling Aum the throat of the Godhead, he once said that nothing was possible without it in the spiritual field. It is known that he put two of his prominent disciples on the path of the upaasanaa of Narayana with a form. However, he seems to have preferred to guide his disciples from the upaasanaa of God with a form to that of God without a form.

Having attained the highest spiritual state, Bhagwaanji, as already stated, used to be absorbed in the self most of the time. But he could easily come down to our level of consciousness to answer questions, or, to give permission to someone to leave. Immediately thereafter, he would rise to his own state. He talked little and that, too, in such low whispers as to be almost inaudible.

Generally, he did initiate a disciple directly by word of mouth. He did so by a mere glance, by giving him a little bhasma or prashad, or by allowing him to have a puff at the chillum. Once, a European's kundalini was awakened by just having a puff at his chillum. With a mere touch of his iron tongs, he shifted a senior disciple from meditating on Narayana with a form to meditating on Him without a form.

What was exactly Bhagwaanji's spiritual state? A pointer in this direction is that a devotee of the Divine Mother Raajnaa had a vision of Bhagwaanji seated before Her at the Khirbhawaani shrine at village Tulamulla, Kashmir. The devotee was a great saint and would have visions of the Divine Mother off and on. Our question is, however, clinched for ever if we consider that Bhagwaanji himself said when an aachaarya from outside the State wanted to know from a devotee in his (Bhagwaanji's) room at what stage of spiritual evolution Bhagwaanji was. While the devotee wondered what to say, Bhagwaan Ji recited the sixth verse of the Fifteenth Chapter of the Bhagavadgita, which, translated into English, reads:" The Sun does not illumine it, nor the moon, nor fire. That is my supreme abode, reaching which one does not return (to this world of birth and rebirth).

Bhagwaanji did not perform miracles deliberately. Miracles often happened where, out of compassion, he helped someone or the country. A very brief account of a few of them is given below.

Bhagwaanji helped a devotee to realise the concept of time relative to man and Lord Brahmaa (The devotee had some reservations about this). Bhagwaanji enabled him to live three life-cycle in only some earthly hours! And in each cycle he reached a mature old age!

Bhagwaanji helped two devotees separately to have a darshana (vision) of the Divine Mother of the Universe in the form of two girl children. A third was helped to have Her darshana in the form of dazzling effulgence equal to that of several suns.

From 1947 onwards, Bhagwaanji took much interest in what was happening around him. He used his spiritual power to help the country. In 1948, our soldiers saw him, at the front and just in front of them, directing them to fire in this or that direction though at that time he was seated in his room in Srinagar. His body was no hurdle in his going anywhere. Once he said that he was himself present at the battle-front, and so there was no danger to Kashmir though, again, he was physically in Srinagar. During the border war with China (1962), he once left his residence and returned the next day. His body was quite cold. He had caught a chill and had bronchitis. In answer to a question by a devotee, he said that he had gone to Tibet to settle the matters. In a few days, there was a lasting cease-fire. He kept a close eye on the 1965 war also.

Bhagwaanji was a tattvajnani (one who has all the knowledge about the elements). By a peculiar type of saadhanaa he had gained control over the elements. During a pilgrimage to the holy cave of Amarnath, he brought rain to a drought-hit area. On some occasions, he stopped rain when it was likely to cause suffering or death. He was able, due to his control over the elements, to know which organ of a person's body was diseased, and to cure it. With a mere look or the bhasma from his dhooni, he cured dreaded diseases like cancer, epilepsy, and the diseases of the heat, the kidneys and the stomach, besides many other physical ailments.

He brought the dead back to life temporarily or permanently, as the situation demanded. Once, he asked someone (probably, Mahaakala, the god of death) to wait till the next day to revive the dead father of a girl whose marriage (lagana) was being performed just then. The man came back to life, blessed the newly-wed couple, and died for good at about noon the next day. Once, two cooked fish, chewed and swallowed by Bhagwaanji himself, were vomited by him in their original form, that is, as two live fish, because the situation demanded that the fish sprang into the nearby spring and swam away !

Once, Bhagwaanji visited Mata Jawalamukhi Shrine at Khrew in Kashmir. There were five or six people with him, so his sister cooked rice sufficient for seven or eight people. But many more started coming to have Bhagwaanji's darshana and, finally, food was needed for 50 people. Finding herself in awkward predicament, Bhagwaanji's sister talked about it to him. He asked her to keep the pot of cooked rice covered while taking helpings out of it. And, lo and behold! All the 50 people were fed, and there was still some food left in the pot!

Now something about how Bhagwaanji used his spiritual power to help householders in solving their domestic problems. Once he fasted for a month with the specific purpose of extending by a year the life-span of man, whose children still needed his attention. Could it be that the food Bhagwaanji would have taken for a month sufficed the man in question for a year and so he continued to live, even though the stock of food he was destined to take in that birth had been exhausted? Several times, he made a peculiar offering to Mahaakala to save the lives of certain people. Sometimes, he prevented road accidents even at far-away places. His blessings helped people in arranging and performing the marriages of their daughters. As a result of his blessings, some people suspended from their services, got reinstated.

It has been already mentioned that, after attaining the highest spiritual state, Bhagwaanji in his life-time, was never hampered by his gross body. He could be present at some other places, too, while he was in Srinagar. No wonder, then, that, after giving up the gross body, he has been helping spiritual aspirants in, and outside, the country. He may appear in his astral body before them or in their meditation.

Source: **Patrika**

19.9 Jagat Guru Bhagawaan Gopinath Ji

B. N. Fotedar

On the 30th December 1993, hundreds of men, women and children surged to the newly built prayer hall for Bhagawaan Gopinath Ji, at Bohri, Talab-Tilloo, Jammu, chanting the mantra 'Om Namo Bhagawate Gopinathaya'. Their faces reflected joy and radiance and extreme pride. The event was the inauguration of a newly built prayer hall and the installation of Bhagawaan Ji's marble statue there in, for hours, devotees thronged the place and paid their homage and sought blessings from the immortal saint. One was left wondering about the personality of this saint who could so inspire people even after throwing away his mortal coil, 25 years ago.

Before dwelling on the life sketch of Bhagawaan Ji, it will be relevant to recall the role of saints in this world. Saints hallow this world. When man forgets the ultimate purpose of life, saints appear and with the surging tide of their devotion redirect the course of humanity. These saints have no creed, cast, colour or country Their approach is universal. It is out of the prayer of a whole society that a saint is born to show human beings the path of righteousness for self-realisation. Our country has produced a galaxy of saints and sufis who have not only enriched the life here but also left their deep imprint on the culture and way of life of the people.

Such a saint was Gopinath Ji, who in his life time achieved great spiritual enlightenment that people in affection addressed him as Bhagawaan (Gopinath Ji). He was born on the 3rd July, 1898, in a humble Bhan family in Srinagar, Kashmir. He is stated to have read up to the middle standard (a rare achievement during those times). He was well conversant with Sanskrit, Persian, English and old Sharda languages. He started his life with a grocer's store but after 2 years he closed it and took up employment in a printing firm. He gave up this job also after about 2 years much against the wishes of the employer who wanted him to continue. After this, he took to the path of spiritualism. He began his spiritual quest with frequent visits to the great shrines of Kashmir like "Goddess Sharika" at Hari Parabat, Srinagar, as well as shrines of 'Khair Bhawani, Jawalamukhi, Jayastheva Bhagwati, Gupt Ganga, Badar Kali and Mahadev hill. He often stayed at these shrines for long periods. He made two pilgrimages to the holy Amarnath cave. He remained celibate throughout his life and lived with different relatives from time to time. He resorted to intense Sadhna at 39 years of age at 'Rangteng" in Srinagar for about 7 years. He renounced all other activities and immersed himself in the contemplation of Parambrahma. It is stated that during this period he did not allow anyone to enter his room and even disliked any sweeping . His only companion was a 'Diya' (oil lamp). After 7 years, he shifted from this place and moved to other relative's homes by turn. From 1949 till his death on the 28th May, 1968, he stayed at one place at Chandpora, Srinagar. The later part of his Sadhana was devoted to the worship of Lord Shiva and Lord Narayana, though it is not clear to which he gave priority in his heart. May be he had made a synthesis of both.

From 1949 onwards, people flocked to offer their homage to Bhagawaan Ji. They were sometimes seen occupying in even the stairs outside his spacious room. He sat on his Asan for 24 hours and took no food except a cup of Kashmiri tea (Kahwa). He smoked his chillum continuously gazing heavenward as if in communion with higher beings or absorbed in intense Sadhana. It must have been his intense Sadhna which sustained his body without regular food, though the physical effects of emaciation etc were apparent. He, however, made light of these problems and once exclaimed that the body was all muck and perishable, meaning thereby that it was the spirit or the soul that needed to be nurtured and cared for. He never preached and seldom spoke directly. He would some times mutter to himself which the devotees present could not follow or understand. His body had to be nudged when he was requested to reply to a query. During the later part of his Sadhna (for about last 20 years of his life), the practice of lighting of a 'Dhooni' (sagri type in which wood or charcoal is burnt) was adopted in which he

made the usual offerings. He would sometimes poke the fire with a pair of tongs himself. However, a few days before leaving his mortal coil he had desired the lighting of the 'Dhooni' to be stopped.

It is believed that saints do not normally interfere with the laws of nature but they are known to help people in their difficulties. Bhagawaan Ji followed this practice of helping human beings in distress and when this was pointed out to him he averted that ants cannot on their own cross a river unless they were carried on strong shoulders. The reference was to the guiding role of saints in crossing the ocean of Maya. He was filled with compassion and was fond of listening to classical and sofiانا music. This encouraged the classical singers to sing in his presence usually on Sundays. These singers included Hindus and Muslims alike and all were welcome in his presence. He was fully conscious of his surroundings and to the threat of the security of Kashmir and indeed of other parts of India and made Herculean efforts on the spiritual level to ward off such threats in 1947 and then again in 1965.

A few incidents of help to his devotees are briefly stated here though there are scores of such incidents in which Bhagawaan Ji played the role of a messiah.

In 1947, he asked a devotee who was posted at Baramalla to move to Srinagar with all his belongings. This was 2 months before the raiders looted the town and razed the buildings to the ground.

A lady who had been confirmed for leukemia was given 'Bhasm' by Bhagawaan Ji and was cured of the disease much to the surprise of her doctor a leading physician at that time.

In 1946, after paying his obescience at the holy shrine of Amar Nath, he detained his party for a few hours much to their chagrin while all other Yatris were seen going on. When he finally allowed them to move, they found that a freak cloudburst had rendered the Yatris who had proceeded there, miserable with cold and drenched at Mahaguns pass, a few miles away from the holy cave.

A devotee had a serious problem while attending to the marriage of the daughter of a relative. The marriage ceremony was performed in one room but in the other the father of the bride was in his death throes. The devotee was perplexed and approached Bhagawaan Ji for help. Bhagawaan Ji uttered the words loudly "Tell him to wait till tomorrow." Thereafter, Bhagawaan Ji accompanied the devotee to the site of marriage and saw the bride and bridegroom off. The father died the next day.

Such was the spiritual eminence of Bhagawaan Ji that one day a learned Acharya from Banaras visited him and enquired of the only devotee present there in the morning about the spiritual status of Bhagawaan Ji. The devotee was perplexed as he could not make such an assessment but Bhagawaan Ji came to his rescue after coming off his reverie and recited saloka No.6 of chapter XV of Shrimad Bhagwat Gita. Translated this verse means "that the sun does not illumine me nor the moon nor the fire that is my supreme stage reaching which one does not return to life."

Even though Bhagawaan Ji never moved out of Kashmir, a lot of people from outside knew him and came to pay their homage to him. Even after he attained 'Nirvana' people not only from India but also from far away countries like Australia came to seek his blessings. His Ashram in Srinagar is still intact even though all the surrounding buildings have been targets of arson.

There is therefore no doubt that his spiritual eminence and prowess are the guiding principles to which people are attracted, some for redressal of their worldly ills while others for their spiritual advancement.

Let this beacon light guide people to spiritual progress so that this country regains her position of leading the world to high thinking and great moral values.

Source: Patrika

19.10 Bhagawaan Gopinath Ji As Jagad Guru

Professor O. N. Chrungoo

Kashmir is indeed a pearl in the Himalayas. Its natural charm matches the spiritual eminence of the saints and sages that have been born in enchanting valley from time to time.

There are several energy centres in Kashmir. These are of two kinds Primary and Secondary. The primary energy centres are the permanent Shiva or Shakti power points, which symbolize the powers of consciousness existing in the Universal Mother, the Universal Mind, or the Universal power. A few instances of these are the Ice-Lingam of the holy cave of Amarnath, which waxes and wanes with the phases of the moon; the Shri Chakra engraved on a Shila (rock) on the hillock of Hari-Parbat symbolizing the Divine Mother as Mata Sarika; the holy spring of Khir Bhawani whose water changes colours with the changing moods of the Divine Mother, Rajna, whom the phenomenon symbolizes; (on the surface of the spring appears automatically the Rajna Chakra, a form of the Divine Mother Rajna, when she is in a happy mood); and the shrine of the Divine Mother Jawalaa at Khrew.

The secondary energy centres are the places of birth, places of penance or the Ashrams of the saints of highest spiritual attainment, whom God sends to this world in order to put the earning humanity back on the rails of spiritual attainments. They also act as the mentors of those who are on the spiritual quest, even sharing their spiritual experiences with them.

A few instances of such saints from the part of Kashmir are Lalleshwari, Peer Pandit Padshah (Rasi Peer Saheb), Mata Roopa Bhawani, Swami Jeewan Saheb and Swami Shaivaachrya Ramjee and such others.

Every Sadhaka has to be clear in perception and understanding about these two types of energy points (Primary and Secondary). Kashmir is full of these Tirthas, seats of power. From the early dawn of history we find a galaxy of sages, savants, seers and spiritual preceptors profitably engaged in going near and near the essence of divinity. Primary energy centres were, their attraction and guiding forces, where they meditated, widened spheres of knowledge, unlocked certain knots for the aspirants, to understand the ultimate reality. They established different schools of thought, established Aashrams, Patshalas and seats of learning. These places became the secondary energy seats for the seekers and their followers.

Neelmata Purana, the ancient record of socio-religious account of Kashmir has paid glowing tribute to the piety prevailing in this land, " O, King (Janmejaya), whatever holy places are found in the world, do exist here also."

Kalhana the great historian too writes in Rajtarangnee, "there is not a space even as large as a grain of sesamum without a Tirtha in this country." Further he writes the great saints have taken birth in this sacred land from time to time.

In our age, too, we were fortunate enough to have amongst us in Kashmir one such spiritual giant, Bhagawaan Gopinath Ji, a multidimensional spiritual personality. He lived in his ownself and yet lived with the masses around him. To write about him, for a lay man in spirituality is nothing short of impudence. But what encouraged me is the feeling that, talking, writing in praise of a saint of the eminence of Bhagawaan Gopinath Ji comes near to worshiping him.

This great saint was born on the 3rd of July, 1898 A. D. at Bana Mohalla, Srinagar, Kashmir. His childhood as well as adolescence was full of strife; he lost both his parents and all the domestic responsibilities evolved on his shoulders; these included the upbringing and marrying off of an unmarried sister. Schooling ended at the Middle standard. However, he learnt the art of composing and worked as a compositor at a printing press. Next he started a small grocers shop at Sekidafar, Safakadal under the guidance of his maternal grand father, Pt. Prasad Joo Parimoo.

Prof. B. N. Parimoo, son of Pt. Prasad Joo Parimoo, writes: "Bhagawan Ji lived a normal life. He had formed a group and as the leader of this group would organise trips to the holy shrines of Khir Bhawani, Sharika, Pokhribal, Jawala Ji, Mahadev and Vicharnagh. He was fond of going to saints. Having married off his younger sister, he felt relieved of great domestic responsibility and started showing less and less attachment to worldly attractions."

Bhagawaan Ji could no longer remain a house holder. He shut himself up in a room for months together and carried on 'Tapasya' (Penance) unmindful of food even. The business of the world did not attract him any more. He severed all worldly bonds and got absorbed in the Absolute. He attained the stature of a 'Siddha'. He attained the position known in the Tantric Lore as that of the celestial realiser.

The late Prof. K. N. Dhar a renowned Sanskrit scholar writes, "such persons of towering stature are 'Divya Sadhkas' (Celestial Realisers) in the Tantric Lore. For them man is essentially part and parcel of Divinity, but owing to his tortoise like self centered attitude, grafting the host of limbs into his own body, has lost much of his flavour and fragrance. Bhagawaan Ji throughout the Years assigned to him for this enabling mission, strove hard in his own unassuming, yet persuasive way to restore that divine spark to man. He tried to rehabilitate him on his actual moorings."

Bhagawaan Ji guided and helped people in general and 'Sadhkas' in particular to strive for service to mankind and the purification of the body, the mind, and the spirit. He himself lived this truth in letter and spirit. Hence he has been accepted, as the great Master the 'Jagadguru'.

Justice S. N. Katju writes, "Bhagawaan Gopinath Ji lived a very cloistered life. He never moved out of the valley. He was a great Siddha. Gradually, his fame spread and saints and 'Saadhus' from different parts of India used to visit him. By his intense Sadhana, he has become a 'Koula' and 'Aghareshwara' of the highest order. He talked little and never preached but he was full of compassion and love for all who sought his protection and blessings. He exercised his spiritual powers in the interests of the nation. Kashmir is the fountain source of Shiva-Shakti worship. It has produced great Koulas and Aghareshwaras of the tallest stature, the last of whom was Bhagawaan Gopinath Ji, who left his mortal frame in July, 1968. His spiritual stature can easily be compared to that of Maharishi Ramana, Shri Rama-Krishna Paramahansa and Shri Auribindo".

Bhagawaan Ram of Varanasi, one of the greatest Aghareshwaras of present day India has described the state of an Aghareshawana thus: "An Aghareshawara reaches a stage where he is totally freed from all Karma bonds. For him, there is no Moksha (liberation) nor re-birth.

"He becomes a burnt seed which cannot sprout. When he leaves his mortal frame, he lives and directs from the astral plane and he may enter the body of a living person and make him an instrument of his line of action. He is not subject to the currents of cause and effect, which bind the ordinary mankind. He is a law unto himself.

In short, he becomes the Sun of his own solar system and performs acts either directly or indirectly which appear to be befitting. Bhagawaan Gopinath Ji belonged to this spiritual line (Parampara) of the Koulas and the Aghareshwaras. Bhagawaan Ram of Varanasi has taken his

photograph to 'Kreem-Kund', one of the oldest and most sacred shrines in Varanasi where He is adored in the midst of the galaxy of Aghareshwaras. Daily 'Satsang' bhajans, and aarti, is performed there."

The main seat of this great saint is at 'Kharayar, Habbakadal, Srinagar, Kashmir, where an Ashram with a registered trust is functioning. Bhagawaan Ji's relics are also there for the darshans of the people. A 'Maha-Yajna' on Jeshtha Shukla Dwitiya and a 'Maha-Jayanti' on Ashaarih Shuukla Dwadashi, and Guru-Poornima on Ashaarih Poornima, are the main festivals celebrated at the Ashram.

Besides these main festivals at Ashram, there is a Japa of 'Guru Geeta' and Homa (Namaa-Smaranaa) of mantras on the first Sunday of every month before sunset. The Ashram at Srinagar is one of the most effective and powerful energy centre.

Justice S. N. Katju says, "Bhagawaan Gopinath Ji seems to be more alive now even after leaving his mortal body". It is as true as the fact that the sun is in the sky and the Ganges springs in the Himalayas, that His influence, guidance and directions are being increasingly felt all over India and even in some foreign lands, wherever his devotees are. He commands as 'Jagad-guru' and guides all. We have only to establish a link with his divine energy through meditation, Puja and Archanaa.

Mr. Philip Simpfendorfer, an Australian devotee of Bhagawaan Ji, has written in the world-famous journal Cosmas, a living paper of Australia, "Kashmir has produced many people of highly developed consciousness. The greatest in recorded history died in 1968."

During his life time of 70 years, Bhagawaan Ji's consciousness settled in the 'Turiyaa'. He never acted like a spiritual leader, not did he seem keen to propegate his outlook on life. In fact he was satisfied to live with relatives as a bachelor uncle. But in his own being he lived out the pre-occupations of the awakened of this age altered states of consciousness, harmonious living with Nature and its powers, helpfulness to others in every day life and concern for humanity's well-being.

Although humble and an introvert, he was able to direct aspirants according to their needs; in the inward sphere, the realm of causes, he was a supreme master. He was willing to heal, work miracles on material and weather conditions, cause divinities to appear and solve the personal problems of individuals, but, when he was involved in massive struggles against the powers of chaos in times of calamity or warfare, no one dared go near him, for he was then like a whirlwind of fire. His devotees still find his presence with them, long after, he gave up the physical body. He still lives.

Bhagawaan Ji is even more active as an inspirer for immature spiritual seekers than he was in his gross body. He is their permanent guide and, indeed, that of humanity at large. His way of working is quite unassuming. He works to help and guide a person from behind the scene. In order to meditate on Bhagawaan Ji one has to think of him as having a turban on his head, a 'White Pheran' (a loose gown worn by Kashmiris) on his body, a Dhooni (Sacred Fire) in front of him. When the meditation (Dhyaana) is perfect, He does nor fail to appear before the 'saadhaka'.

Vandey Bhagawaantam Gopinatham !

Source: **Patrika**

19.11 Bhagwaan GopiNath Ji

Some reminiscences and thoughts

A. K. Jalali

I had my first 'darshan' of Bhagwaan GopiNath Ji in the year 1966. Those days, he lived at the house of the Mallas at Gudood Bagh, Srinagar-Kashmir. I found him seated on an 'aasana' in a corner of the room on the first floor. He was wholly absorbed in the self, seemingly oblivious of the surroundings and even of his own body. There, I saw for the first time also a young bachelor, Bodha Kak, Later, I found that he was deeply devoted to Bhagwaanji. Everyday, he would light, in a 'Sigrhi', the small 'dhooni' (sacrificial-fire) into which Bhagwaanji would make offerings, off and on. Whenever Bodha Kak was away, I would have the privilege of lighting the 'dhooni'.

I went to have a 'darshan' of Bhagwaanji almost everyday. Seated before him, I got wholly absorbed in divine thoughts and almost lost the awareness of my physical existence. This continued unto May, 1968 when he gave up the gross body in the very house in which I had seen him first.

Bereft of the bliss of his physical presence, I found myself utterly lost a ship-without an anchor. A student of the B.A. then, I found it very difficult to concentrate on my studies. I even cursed myself, feeling that I was floating rudderless in the ocean of life. Then, lo and behold! Bhagwaanji's grace came in the year 1969 when I had a vision of him in a dream. He said to me, "My child, why are you sad? I am alive and at the place which you used to visit to see me." This filled me with inexpressible joy. I started once again visiting the place and experienced as much bliss there as before.

Then, owing to Bhagwaanji's grace, some of his disciples and devotees set up an 'ashram', named after him at Kharyar, Habbakadal, Srinagar. A beautiful marble statue of his was also installed there. I felt as if Bhagwaanji had returned to this world in his physical form. Unfathomable was the joy I experienced. My visits to the 'ashram' were regular, and I participated every day in the prayers and the evening 'aarti' (song service) offered to Bhagwaanji there.

Now, I should like to pen down further what I observed about Bhagwaanji in the course of my regular visits to him at Gudood Bagh during a period of two years or so. It has been already mentioned that he would be absorbed in the self and make offerings into a small 'dhooni' (The latter practice, I have long since been told, was related to his efforts to save Kashmir). He lived a hard and disciplined spiritual life, never indulging any of his senses. Sometimes, for weeks and even months on end, he would deny himself even food, taking off and on, only a cup of the Kashmiri milkless sugar tea seasoned with cardamom. Ever absorbed in the Divine, Bhagwaanji would never say anything to any one, unless it was in answer to a question. Even then, he spoke the fewest words needed, and in a low whisper which was hard to catch. Men, Women and children came in large numbers everyday to have his 'darshan'. He spoke to everyone politely and sweetly. Towards some visitors in particular, whom Bhagwaanji perceived as faulty or erring, his behaviour was visibly harsh, he got up and chased them away even from the stairs leading up to his room and, on occasions, struck them with the long iron tongs-the kind some ochre-robed wandering monks carry-which he always kept by his side. However, to the true devotee, Bhagwaanji's anger too proved a blessing.

Even a casual visitor could feel that Bhagwaanji had all his senses under perfect control. His affectionate nature reminds me of a personal experience. Once, after I had prepared Kashmiri tea-Kahava-and poured it into his khos (an alloy tea-cup used only by Kashmiri Hindus), he asked me lovingly, 'tehi cheyaunaa? tohi phirvanna Pannas? (Won't you take tea? Didn't you pour yourself a cupful?). A person's faith did not come in the way of his affection. Once he remarked in answer to a question from a devotee, "What is the difference between a Hindu and a Mussalman?" He was, indeed, an ocean of love and compassion. Whoever approached him with a mundane or spiritual problem, never went away disappointed, very often, his helping others resulted in miracles though he did not seem to believe in performing miracles in order to impress anyone. His spiritual state was far above to that of egoism. I never found him using the first person singular pronoun.

All were equal before him. In this connection, I can recall an incident to which I was an eye-witness. Once, some Ochre-robed monks called on him as they would often do. As was his habit he gave away to them a rupee each. One of them expressed the wish to be given two rupees. Bhagwaanji simply sent him packing; he would not discriminate between one monk and another.

Devotees and musicians would sing devotional songs before Bhagwaanji though, being absorbed in the self, he would not seem to be listening to them. Once, while a party of musicians was singing 'Soofiana' songs to the accompaniment of the relevant instruments, I heard Bhagwaanji remark in Kashmiri, 'Poga Kashiree' (O Kashmir, which has seldom been calm and peaceful). I was unable to grasp the significance of this remark then, but its full import became clear to me many years later when militancy robbed Kashmir of all calm and peace, and lacs of people had to migrate to several other parts of the country to save their lives and dignity.

Bhagwaanji's eminence as a guru is hard to imagine. He became one with God during his earthly life. If anyone thinks of him as Shiva, he will see him in the form of Shiva, and if, in any other form of Divinity, he will see him in that form. This has been borne out by several of his disciples and devotees. Meditating on him helps one to get rid of lust, anger, greed and delusion.

How can one attain Bhagwaanji's grace? My own observation and experience have shown that, for this purpose, one must perform right actions and have right thoughts, one should not harbour any evil designs against anyone, to whatever creed or caste that person may belong. Egoism and pride catapult one far away from Bhagwaanji. And last but not the least one must surrender completely at his holy feet.

Source: Patrika

19.12 The Inspired Sage of Accomplishment

Jankinath Kaul 'Kamal'

*deham ca nasvaramavasthitamuthitam va
siddho na pasyati yotadyagamata svarupam
daivadapetamuta daivavasadupetam
vaso yatha parikrtam madiramadandhah
(Bhagvata Bk. XI, Ch. 13, Ve. 36)*

*Drunk deep, one becomes unmindful,
Knows not about the cloth he wears -
Whether it's fallen off the body or held on to the shoulder;
Likewise, the sage of spiritual attainment*

*In disembodied joy of Divine Ecstasy,
Knows not about this transient body -
Whether he retains it by the power of destiny
Or has gone beyond it by Grace Divine [1].*

*deho pi daivavasagah khalu karma yavat
svarambhakam pratisamiksata eva sasuh
tam saprapancamahirudhasamadhiyogah
svapnam punarna bhajate pratibuddhavastuh
(Bhagvata Bk. XI, Ch. 13, Ver. 37)*

*This body moves on the power of destiny
Unto the fruit of actions done in previous births;
The natural plan of whose commencement
Involves investigation, as if, of arrows
Shot formerly - whence and why;
But one in a meditation mood
Got firm in the knowledge of the Supreme Self,
Shares not the experience of manifest projection,
Just as a person, on waking from sleep,
Minds not his dream [2].*

*vag gadgada dravate yasya cittam
rudatyabhiksanam hasati kvacicca
vilajja udgayati nrtyate ca
madbhaktiyukto bhuvanam punati
(Bhagavat Bk. XI, Ch. 14, Ver. 24)*

*Whose earnest devotion melts the mind
And renders his speech convulsive,
Who frequently weeps, laughs on occasions
Unabashed sings aloud and dances;
Endowed with My Bhakti,
He makes mankind sinless [3].*

[1]. Just as in the case of Lal Ded (of Kashmir) in her own expression:

*'suy gav Lali me vakh ta vacun
tavay hyotum me nangay nacun.'*

*"To Lala, that precept inspired me:
Therefore, I took to roaming naked."*

[2]. As is said about the accomplished sage:

*prakasamane paramarthabhanau nasyatyavidyatimire samaste
tada' budhah nirmalavrtyayo 'pi kincinna pasyanti bhavaprapancam (Yogavasistha)*

*"When the sun of spirituality shines bright
And the darkness of ignorance vanishes completely,
The wise, even with a purified mind-process,
Then, has no feeling of worldliness as himself."*

[3]. This is the sign of a truly inspired sage:

*etavadeva khalu lingamalingamurteh
samsanta samsrticirabhramanirvrtasya
tajnasya yatmadanakopavisadamoha -
lobhapadamanudinam nipunatanutvam. (Yogavasistha)*

*This alone is the sign of that non-distinct self,
Whose long-drawn rolling in births has ended,
And, who is tranquil on realisation - Thou Art That;*

*That his relative emotions -
Desire, anger, grief, delusion and greed,
Lose their weight day after day.*

Source: Patrika

19.13 Bhagwaan Gopinath

An Apostle of Sahaj Yoga

S.N. Zadoo " Suman "

Since 1968, when Bhagawaan Ji attained Maha Samadhi many articles have appeared on his personality, achievements and state of consciousness in "Patrika" but I would venture to focus on his Sahaj Yog or what is referred to as communion in philosophy or realization of Truth by means of reasoning and discrimination. In the realm of duality, one sees another, hears, smells, addresses, knows and comprehends another, but the undivided self, by casting off the desires created by ignorance, can recover the knowledge of its oneness with the supreme Self and realize freedom as Kashmir Shaivism has also propounded.

When the Sense organs act in obedience to spiritual laws, the worldly tendencies are overcome.

Evil is rooted in attachment of self with body and mind. The intrinsic nature of self is detachment, the meditation being the last step known as Sahaj Yog.

The spontaneous and unceasing love of Atman is real Sahaj Yog. Bhagawaan Ji used it as a medium of Higher knowledge or Moksha. He was always mixed with devotees but detached in mind and its determinative faculties. A world outside the realm of self was of no interest to him and he never wanted to waste an iota of a second without meditating on his Master. After all man belongs to the animal kingdom. It happens at occasions that we do a pious act mentally, morally or physically. This state of mind leads us to believe that there is some super power to bid us do a good act. On the reverse we undertake to follow a bad path and bear its fruit to our disadvantage. The difference between these two states of mind is due to ignorance which creates hurdles. Bhagawaan Ji perceived his self three fold in this body viz. through wisdom eye, mind and heart.

His self was unimpeded like a fish in water and unobstructed as a bird in sky (Upanishad). Sahaj Yog i.e. communion or balanced mind used to be at his command in wakefulness, dream, sound sleep and when he went beyond these three states i.e. attained Tu1ya, it rested and later on entered his own self. When an aspirant is overcome by light, he sees no dreams and is balanced/happy. Bhagawaan Ji felt at that time as if endowed with faith, chastity and austerity i.e. three glories of the spiritual field. In all the three states, external, internal and intermediate, he was never nervous and experienced one-in-many and many-in- one being thus free from any bondage (Upanishad).

He used to offer oblations to fire in a fire pot nearby unceasingly which created heavenly atmosphere around him as fire is the first element to have conceived the light.

This signified a discipline as propounded by the Vedas. After all, the source of knowledge, attainment of freedom and enjoyment of Moksh are all embodied in the Vedas. This is distinctly known as spiritual discipline and Bhagawaan Ji used to act accordingly. His physical actions were "ritual gestures and his pleasures "offering to the self", to quote Soundarilahri. He dedicated all actions to Him may be Japa, Mudra or Parikrama. These are the symptoms of a

Sahaj Yogi or of what is conceived as communion. One would find Bhagawaan Ji always in silence and seclusion ever since he had attained Sahaj Yog. With eyes open and mind fixed he used to bless devotees. On Nad or (Transcendent Sound) he felt as if he was himself blessed, when it rose from within. He tried to fix his mind on central point of eye brows (light divine). He was a perfect saint devoted to super consciousness.

It is said that Bhagawaan Ji had circumbulated Hari - Parvat in Srinagar for twelve years in his childhood, where he had attained spiritual power. From natural impulse he had intuited that he was in all and all was in him. Out of the bounty of Lord's grace, he enlightened others, and was always on his way undismayed, never losing, composure and delight.

Every phase of Bhagawaan Ji's life was a miracle. It was observed that he was in indeterminate ecstasy" when in total silence. Of course he would return to his normal state on entrusting the body to him. Surely one has to long for a meeting before it can come about and this longing cannot be aroused and is to be ostensibly awaited. In Sahaj Yog he became transformed unto Him. I bow to thee my Master and pray for your peace sublime.

Source: Patrika

19.14 Bhagwaanji

As our children know and see Him

A.N. Dhar

For the bulk of Kashmiri Pandits now living in Jammu, away from the valley of Kashmir, the land of their birth, the Bhagawaan Gopi Nath Ji Ashram at Udaiwala, Jammu has assumed the sanctity of a Tirathasthan. Within the brief span of only a few years, it has grown into a vital centre, throbbing with spiritual and cultural activity. For the young and the old alike, it is a prized fount of inspiration and strength. This is evident from the sizeable gatherings of devotees that can be seen here on all days of the week, especially on Sundays in the evening. Thousands of devotees are served prasad here, consisting invariably of a full meal, on festive occasions. Yagyas are performed here periodically, and the birthday of Bhagawaan Ji is celebrated with extraordinary zeal and devotion every year. One is delighted to watch young volunteers working in perfect discipline and with exemplary devotion, rendering valuable social service to the large crowds on such occasions.

The various programmes and activities organized by the Bhagawaan Gopinath Ji Trust have produced tangible results. They particularly serve to promote religious and social awareness among the youth of our community. This awareness is an indispensable means to preserving our spiritual and cultural heritage. It is important to mention here that disciplined and collective participation of the devotees in Kirtan, consisting of devotional hymns touching upon the spiritual qualities and attainments of Bhagawaan Ji, has a significance of its own. The impact on the young particularly is immediate and enduring. The religious activities of the Ashram have thus a healthy, formative influence on our adolescent boys and girls.

It is widely known now that the Bhagawaan Gopi Nath Ji Trust has been paying special attention to the education and spiritual growth of the young. Incentives in the shape of scholarships and prizes are accordingly given by the Trust to the meritorious and deserving students of our community in order to ensure that they shape well and succeed in life. It is in this context that a symposium on the topic "The Spiritual Eminence of Bhagawaan Gopi Nath Ji" was held at the Ashram at Udaiwala, Jammu as part of the annual "Navreh" celebration on 1st April, 1995. Thirty six young students (boys and girls) presented essays at the function bearing on Bhagawaan Ji, which they had thoughtfully planned and written in advance. A panel of judges

evaluated the performance of the participants, who were formed into two batches - seniors and juniors. From among the senior participants, Sandeepa Kaul bagged a prize each for i) the best presentation and ii) for the overall best material. Manu Bhat, from among the junior participants, got a prize for the best presentation. Some consolation prizes were also awarded to the other deserving students.

A careful reading of the written scripts of the young competitors reveals that most of them, as was desirable, must have consulted the available published materials on the life, teachings and spiritual achievements of Bhagawaan Ji. Some of them must have gathered further relevant information from other sources (such as their parents who knew the Bhagawaan through personal contact). In almost every script Bhagawaan Ji is described in glowing terms as veritably an Incarnation of the Divine and as a Jagat Guru. None of the writers has failed to mention the miracles attributed to the great saint, which he is known to have performed, without making an exhibition of his powers, to help his devotees in diverse ways, to cure diseases like cancer and to save the country when attacked by Pakistan in 1947 and 1965 and by China in 1962. Several essays have dwelt on the intense Sadhana that the Bhagawaan performed with sustained rigour throughout his life. Some essays highlight the fact that Bhagawaan Ji's fame as a spiritual genius and as an eminent saint has spread to countries abroad and that the number of his devotees has been swelling steadily. In a number of essays there is evidence, at places, of the young students' introspection - their own perception of Bhagawaan Ji's spiritual greatness, though its articulation is not adequate. Obviously, they owe this gain in self-introspection and spiritual perception to their consistent participation in the programmes of the Ashram. Paying tributes to the spiritual qualities and attainments of the Bhagawaan, the students in general have expressed their adoration for him and acknowledged their faith in him as the Sadguru who alone can heal our woes.

Salient points from the essays (with the name of the participant given at the end of each point in parentheses) are reproduced here for the benefit of Bhagawaan Ji's devotees and admirers:

19.14.1 A. Extract from the essays of Senior Participants

1. Bhagawaan Ji was a spiritual genius, a Master who had the power to carry innumerable souls across the ocean of samsara (Nidhi Khazanchi)
2. Bhagawaan Ji's spiritual life demonstrates the inner divinity of man and the sacredness of Nature (including the earth we inhabit). He worked for the good of the humanity at large. (Purnima Kaul).
3. Bhagawaan Ji's spiritual presence as a Jagat Guru has been felt by some of his devotees living in Australia. (Monika Bradoo)
4. Bhagawaan Ji is the saint par excellence, the saint of all times. He assumed the human form for the spiritual upliftment of mankind. (Jharna Jalali)
5. Bhagawaan Ji dispensed help to his devotees taking into account their different levels of consciousness and needs. He was inclined more towards the Tantric method of worship. (Vimal Raina).
6. Bhagawaan Ji is 'Kalpavraksha' in the sunburnt desert that this world is. He gives his bounty to every one according to the latter's capacity to receive. (Rakesh Pandita).
7. In Bhagawaan Ji's view God-realization is within the reach of any one whose devotion is intense and sincere. (Sachin Bhat)
8. Bhagawaan Ji had attained the highest state of consciousness through devotion and self-discipline. Spiritual seekers experienced bliss in his company. (Asseem Zutshi)

9. A mere glance at the picture of Bhagawaan Ji (when I visited the Ashram at Udaiwala, Jammu, for the first time) made me feel that purifying Amrita was being showered upon me. I always perceive a radiant glow on the Bhagawaan's photograph/statue. What his spiritual eminence consists in can only be felt as 'something' incommunicable. (Sharmishtha Kaul).
10. Bhagawaan Ji devoted all his time to Sadhana and to the spiritual advancement of his devotees. (Usha Parihar)
11. Bhagawaan Ji was, in a sense, a category apart as a spiritual Master; he outclassed many a seer and saint. (Archana Raina)
12. With his eyes turned upward, Bhagawaan Ji remained absorbed in God-consciousness throughout. With the dhooni aname in front of him, he would now and then smoke his chillum, but inwardly he was always attuned to the Divine. (Suman Kachroo)
13. A siddha of a high order, Bhagawaan Ji was a trikal - drashta. (Davinder)
14. Bhagawaan Gopi Nath Ji had descended into the human form to deliver Bhaktas across the ocean of Samsara. He illuminated the path of spirituality for the seekers he blessed. He was charitable to all and led men Godward. (Anil Kaul)
15. Bhagawaan Ji attained spiritual heights, far beyond the limits of Varnashrama and formal religion. In marked contrast to his inward greatness, he behaved outwardly like an ordinary man. (Snehlata)
16. Expressions like 'the depth of oceans', 'vastness of the blue sky', and 'tolerance of the earth' could give us a hint of the Bhagawaan's eminence. Yet, no words can express all about his spiritual greatness. (Sandeepa Kaul)
17. Godlike Bhagawaan Ji knew the past, present and future of the devotees who came to seek his blessings. (Sonu Bradoo)

19.14.2 B. Extracts from the essays of Junior Participants

1. Bhagawaan Ji continues to protect his devotees. When we left the valley in 1990, we had to relinquish all our belongings there. Our faith in the Bhagawaan has shielded us all through. We have overcome our difficulties through his grace (Chandrika Jalali).
2. Bhagawaan Gopi Nath Ji was an accomplished Aghoreshwar, having attained the highest stage of self-realization. He lived a simple life, devoid of pomp and show. All that he said or did during his life time has already become an inspiring legend (Anu Bhat).
3. Devotees sought Bhagawaan Ji as bees go about in search of flowers (to suck honey from). He was a source of solace and strength to them. Just as sandalwood tree provides its soothing cool to the poisonous snakes that coil themselves around its stem, so did the Bhagawaan soothe and heal the worldlings who approached him. (Manu Bhat)
4. Bhagawaan Gopi Nath Ji practised meditation both on Sakar Narayan and on the formless Maheshwara. Even after attaining Mahasamadhi, he continues to guide aspirants on the spiritual path. (Ridhma Saproo)
5. When Bhagawaan Ji provided his healing touch to a devotee in distress, he did so directly himself, without invoking a spirit or a god, or chanting a mantra. More and more people are joining the big family of his devotees and getting blessed. (Isha Kaul).
6. It is very difficult to make an adequate assessment of Bhagawaan Ji's eminence. As a saint, he was unique and incomparable. (Nidhi Nehru)

7. Bhagawaan Gopi Nath Ji had remarkable qualities as a saint. He commanded rare spiritual powers which the great siddhas of yore and Avatars only possessed. (Sakchi Nehru)
8. Whoever came within Bhagawaan Ji's spiritual hale experienced inward peace and illumination. All the devotees felt the impact of his presence. (Shivani Raina)
9. The true mark of a spiritual person is that he is free from prejudices, and is above casteism and communalism. Bhagawaan Ji had all these qualities. He was a very liberal and kind-hearted saint, and Siddha of high order. (Roma Dhar)
10. Though Bhagawaan Ji has left his mortal frame, his spirit continues to protect and guide us in all walks of life. When we bow to his statue, we feel blessed inwardly. (Anmol Kaul)
11. Bhagawaan Ji never acted like a preacher. He spoke very little but radiated spirituality that touched the souls of his devotees. He was virtual Shiva; cosmic rays of perennial bliss emanating from Him illuminated the minds of his devotees. (Remu Kaul)
12. I am a naughty girl in the class and sometimes the teacher taunts me. However, whenever I remember Bab Maharaj (Bhagawaan Ji), every one loves me. (Rema Kaul)
13. Bhagawaan Ji would rarely talk but he often uttered the words sezar (simplicity/straightforwardness) and pazar (truthfulness). He was himself an embodiment of these spiritual qualities. An aspirant who cultivates these qualities in himself is sure to attain his goal. (Sunnhalee Razdan)
14. Although as displaced Kashmiri Pandits we are passing through difficult times, we are lucky enough to remain in Bhagawaan Ji's blessed fold. I personally feel that His divine Hand is always on my head, guiding me every moment. (Amit Kaul)
15. Bhagawaan Ji was truly an incarnation of God. His divine descent served one important purpose - the spiritual upliftment of his devotees. Although he attained Mahanirvana in 1968, He is always accessible to us through prayer and meditation. He influences our spiritual growth in many imperceptible ways. (Sushma)
16. Bhagawaan Ji did not deliver any spiritual discourses but induced spirituality through a touch, a look or by offering bhasma, prasad or a puff from his chillum. (Nitin Ganjoo)
17. Personally I am indebted to Bhagawaan Ji, who saved my life here in exile (a fugitive from the valley) when I was stung by a snake. I invoked his name for help and could see only Him around me. The Bhagawaan's kripa saved my life, which was otherwise threatened with death. (Ashutosh Ganju)
18. Bhagawaan Ji's achievement in sadhana was supreme - he had attained complete union with God. He was Ishwara in the human form and he made free use of his divine shakti for the welfare of his devotees. (Avinash Ganju)
19. Although Bhagawaan Ji lived throughout in the valley of Kashmir his spiritual influence and fame have spread far beyond the valley, even to countries abroad. Centres dedicated to him have sprung up in many parts of the country; one important centre has been established in Australia. He will continue to inspire generations and multitudes of devotees throughout the world. (Sunita Sharma)

It is hoped that our young men and women will continue to explore more facts about the great personality of Bhagawaan Ji and his spiritual attainments. They should not rest content with barely reading the articles and books on the Bhagawaan that have been published so far. They should read the materials with care, analyse their content and arrive at their own conclusions. They are expected to extend their knowledge of what sainthood involves and read more about our spiritual heritage. The more advanced students among them should build up a good reading

background in the areas of religion and philosophy. Thus equipped, they will develop aptitude for independent study and research. They can surely explore more illuminating facts about Bhagawaan Gopi Nath Ji's spiritual life and teachings if they persevere in this endeavour.

Source: **Patrika**

19.15 The Portrayal of the Holiest of The Holy

S. N. Dhar

1. **To** perceive the shapeless, blissful, essence of wisdom, beyond the impact of duality, His impact and greatness, is knowledge. To understand the Godhead, His deeds, qualities, impact, mystery and essence is service. Mysterious, beyond description conceivable only by the faithful.

2. Animate and inanimate; shapeless and with shape; perceivable and imperceptible; physical and minute; kind and merciful; tranquil and stable; knowledge and love, broad-minded and friendly, beautiful and fragrant; endless beginningless and transcendental; omnipresent; omniscient and omnipotent; All pervading and within the reach of the devoted.

3. In the beginning; there was nothing but God. After the creation, everything perceivable is God. Truth and untruth, Purushuttam, Ishwara is only God. Beyond the creation is Brahman, blissful God. The cause of whole creation and beyond illusion is God. The soul of all souls, Deathless and beyond the limit of time. Unchangeable and unfathomable but all-pervading and within the reach of the faithful and devoted.

It was a pleasure to go through 'Patrika' published by Bhagawaan Gopi Nath Ji Trust, Talab, Tiloo, Jammu. The topics dealing with the holy saint's life and teachings inspired me to pen down the following which, if it pleases the holy Guru, may see the light of day.

In fact it is the good fortune of those who come in contact with a great Guru and thus liberate themselves from the cycle of birth and death by uniting with the divine Lord. A seeker of God is doubly born. He gets his birth from his parents and second birth from his Guru who puts him on the righteous path with the enfoldment of Brahama Jnana (knowledge Divine). In the words of a renowned poet, we can afford to displease the Lord, the father but not the Guru as without Guru we cannot perceive the unfathomable, beginningless, unending all pervading universal soul.

It is as a result of good deeds that one becomes a true seeker and finds a master who leads him towards self realisation. Such masters come down to earth when it is enveloped by gloom and darkness of greed and selfishness. To save mankind from this gloom, the masters incarnate and drive away the evil. Those who are pure, chaste and deserving follow their faith and save themselves from the quagmire of sin. The same was the condition when Bhagawaan Gopinath came in the human form. He has purified the faithful and with his all pervading spirit continues to guide the needy and the deserving.

To free oneself from the bondage of life and death, one has to seek union with the Lord through the technique of Yoga taught by saints like Bhagawaan Ji. For this it is necessary that we observe the discipline as preached by the masters for the ultimate good. Lord Krishna advises Arjuna and the mankind to practise the divine technique of uniting with God, known as Yoga. What this technique is can only be given by masters like Bhagawaan Ji. Therefore, it is high time that in order to overcome the impending gloom we follow the techniques of Bhagawaan Ji. May all human beings be purified and led to the path of liberation by the sacred teachings of Bhagawaan Gopinath, the great master of modern times - **Amen !**

Source: **Patrika**

19.16 The Human Mind and Sadhana

A. K. Kotha

The human mind is like that monkey, incessantly active by its own nature; then it becomes drunk with the wine of desire, that increases its turbulence. Desire begets jealousy at the success of others and last of all the demon of pride enters the mind, making it consider itself all-important. How hard to control such a mind.

The mind influences every cell in the body; human ageing is fluid and changeable; it can speed up, slow down, stop for a time, and even reverse itself! Hundreds of research findings of the last three decades have verified that ageing is much more dependent on the individual than was ever dreamed of in the past. To challenge ageing in its core, this entire world-view must be challenged first, for nothing holds more power over the body than ingrained beliefs of the mind.

Spirituality is not meant to be something that is unrelated to the body. Sickness and ageing result from the body's inability to reach its natural goal, which is to join the mind in perfection and fulfillment. Using meditation as way to defeat ageing is a legitimate spiritual goal.

There is nothing more powerful than holy company to uplift the depressed mind of a spiritual aspirant and infuse it with the favour of the spiritual mood.

Swami Vivekananda teaches:

"The mind has to be gradually and systematically brought under control. The will has to be strengthened by slow, continuous and persevering drill. The purer the mind, the easier it is to control. Purity of the mind must be insisted upon. The man who is perfectly moral has nothing more to do; he is free". A reverent study of lives and teachings of the great souls who have realised God will keep the mind pure, then there are powerful aids to steady the mind the study of good and holy books and contemplation on good topics. Malice, deceit and crookedness should be utterly given up. If the mind does not become steady when we sit for meditation, recite exalting prayers and cry to Him with a yearning heart. Keep a large picture of your chosen Deity (Ista-Devata) in front of you, and fixing your eyes thereon, pour forth your heart in prayer. A weak minded person will not pray; instead, he will simply sit brooding over his past or blaming other people for his misfortunes. Just as a cow yields much milk when it is well fed, likewise when the mind is provided spiritual food, it attains tranquility, spiritual food consists of meditation, prayer, contemplation and japam. Gossip, speaking ill of others, interference in matters not pertaining to oneself, the seeking of acquaintances, and idling away time in the company of others, are very harmful. It will not be difficult to control the mind if one resorts to solitude and divine contemplation from one's early years. Shri Krishna says in sloka 60 & 67 of chapter 2 in the Gita:

"The turbulent senses, O Arjuna, do violently snatch away the mind of even a wise man striving after perfection. For the mind which follows in the wake of the wandering senses, carries away his discrimination as a wind carries off its course a boat on the waters". As it is very difficult to gather the mustard seeds that escape out of a torn package and get scattered in all directions, so it is not a very easy affair to ingather and concentrate the mind which runs after worldly things in diverse directions. If therefore we are to nip the trouble in the bud, we must restrain the mind from thinking constantly about sense objects. The mind is like a spoiled child always restless. Practise of japa and meditation regularly is very helpful in controlling the mind.

The Gita also says in sloka 70 of chapter 2 "He unto whom all desires enter as waters into the sea. Which, though ever being filled is ever mentionless, attains to Peace and not he who hugs his desires". Undistrubed calmness of mind is attained by cultivating:

- a. Friendliness towards the happy.
- b. Compassion for the unhappy.
- c. Delight in the good.
- d. Indifference to the evil.

It will be impossible to control the mind

1. If we have strong likes and dislikes, attachments and aversions.
2. If we live an immoral life
3. If we have the habit of deliberately harming others.
4. If we indulge in intoxicants and live unbalanced chaotic lives.
5. If we habitually indulge in vain controversies.
6. If we torture our bodies unnecessarily, spend our energies in futile pursuits, force rigid silence upon ourselves or become too egocentric.
7. If we are over ambitious.
8. If we have a feeling of guilt.

The impurities of the mind can be gradually removed by providing the mind wholesome food on the one hand and by transforming the guna structure of the mind in order to bring about the preponderance of sattva in the personal nature, and finally by transcending even Sattva.

Swami Vivekananda says "the food that we eat is transformed in three different ways; that the heaviest part of it becomes the excrement, that of medium density is transformed into flesh and the subtlest part goes to form the mind". When the food is pure, the mind becomes pure, memory becomes firm; and when a man is in possession of a firm memory, all the bonds which tie him down to the world are loosened. A good memory is indispensable to sound judgment.

Source: Patrika

19.17 Multi Dimensional Bhagawaan Gopinath Ji

(A Point of view)

A. K. Parimoo

19.17.1 Apology

To begin with I beg an excuse from esteemed readers for any wrong or erroneous interpretations, for I feel I am too small to describe the State Bhagawaan Ji was enjoying as he lived in extreme introversion all along his life and never preached or deliberated. His talking sessions ended in a few words only during his life time. The only evidence from the practical life of Bhagawaan Ji is his Karamyoga. Like lord Krishna he fought wars in a passive manner himself not using weapons or arms but simply directing soldiers to catch the right hideouts of Barbarians and thus defeating them saving the innocent and hence keeping the morale of the country and soldiers high. Like a compassionate father he cured instantly his disciples of fatal diseases, helped to raise the economy of the down-trodden and brought the wrong on the right path.

In all, helping the Humanity to heal both physical and mental wounds. During this whole process he renounced all the fruits unlike other saints who take delight in being applauded and cheered

in large gatherings. Let me make an attempt to peep into various dimensions of the Holy master as under:

19.17.2 *Bhagawaan Ji as Siddharth*

Six hundred years before Christ one night when the world was in a deep slumber, a young restless prince worried to see Pain, Disease and Death, left his home breaking all shackles - Ego, Desire, Lust and Greed in silent jungles, with a firm determination to seek the sole creator to ask Him the cause of human sufferings. Even after giving up human vices he observed three barriers in the cosmic journey of his mind blocking his way e.g. Hunger, Pain and Fear; he waged a war with the three body concerns. Starving for months he smiled before roaring tigers and hissing cobras. A mere skeleton with a coverage of dry skin he meditated under the scorching sun avoiding shade just to invite pain. Finally he won the war. A relaxed and liberated Siddharth got the required enlightenment and awakening and thenceforth a Buddha.

Likewise Bhagawaan Ji who right from childhood shunned company and was indifferent towards material pleasures, obviously because of his previous sanskars, divested his mind gradually of every desire, ego, greed and lust. Again like Siddharth he wanted to give up his body concerns i.e. pain, hunger and fear. He walled himself up in a damp dark room without ventilation or an air inlet, all stinking, a habitat of little blood suckers. He never objected to a rat boring a hole in his heel. He had no desire to inhale fresh air in burning heat nor asked for warm equipment to face chilling cold because he had to conquer pain. He starved for months together and the pangs of hunger did not deflect his aim. Peeping through the door he was seen looking at the opposite wall with vacant eyes, his sole companion being an earthen lamp always burning. Nobody heard him reciting any hymn or prayer. He would not allow even the room to be dusted. During this period, to become fully sickness proof and pain-proof he swallowed poisonous drugs. He vomitted potfuls of blood but did not surrender before hunger and pain. Nobody except his elder sister was allowed to get into the room; she alone was the communication medium. For seven years (1930-37) Bhagawaan Ji dived constantly deep into the eternal ocean of Spirituality and in each dive collected the gems of eternal bliss to be utilized for the welfare of his children being Himself a global compassionate father. Thirty nine years old Bhagawaan Gopinath Ji came out of the solitary cell with a lean and a pale body but a radiant soul in communion with the Supreme creator, Param Brahma. From Thirty ninth year onwards he selected an asan to accomplish great jobs in the field of Karam- Yoga.

Obviously the initial modes of Sadhana adopted by Lord Buddha and Bhagawaan Ji seem alike in terms of arduous physical torture but a distinction is there as indicated here under:

19.17.3 *Bhagawaan Ji*

1. Half of his life he spent in achieving the Supreme and the rest half he spent entirely in the service of his people as compassionate father and as a silent commander, to lead the Army against the tyrants using his miraculous powers.
2. An extreme introvert who preferred to live in solitude right from childhood.
3. A born celibate who said that lust is the biggest barrier in seeking eternal bliss.
4. Passed whole of his life in the valley of Kashmir occasionally in energy sites of the valley viz Hariparbat, Khir-Bhawani, Jyestha Bhagwati and Jwala Ji.
5. Believed in his religion and all its allied traditions, respected all religions, himself being above religion.

6. Had a strong belief in God. The real Siddhi lies in total communion with the supreme creator, Param Brahma The monosyllable OM (AUM) is the union of Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh. On his being an introvert he said; "A Yogi may realize God but an introvert can realize all the aspects of God."

7. Bhagawaan Ji had a mission to help those in distress by his miraculous powers. A miracle literally means breaking a subtle natural law, for example raising a dead man to life. Such powers for a saint like Bhagawaan Ji are not consumed as he had attained Shiva-hood. It matters nothing for an ocean if a million buckets of water are taken away from it.

8. Like a Zen master Bhagawaan Ji would beat a devotee and lose temper but like a compassionate father he never did so with an intention to harm him, simply to bring him on the right path or to counter the ill effects of his stars. Once he injured a devotee by his forks, shedding blood the devotee left his room scared. Later on his horoscope indicated that a fatal accident would befall him wherein a heavy blood loss was expected on the same day.

9. Bhagawaan Ji never left his aasana. Whatever his devotees offered him, he would distribute it among those present leaving nothing behind. Never in his life did he ask for any thing from his devotees.

19.17.4 Lord Buddha

1. He also strove for the first half of his life in attaining enlightenment and the rest half he spent in preaching his eight fold path which attracted the masses giving birth to a new religion. He never performed miracles.

2. An extrovert who was bound to talk and deliberate in order to bring people into his fold.

3. Married and in the prime of youth renounced his wife and child to seek enlightenment.

4. Roamed all over the country to preach his eight fold path.

5. Founded a new religion i.e. Buddhism which gave a set back to Hinduism. More than half of Asia embraced Buddhism as violence was at peak and people preferred Buddhism which lays great stress on non-violence.

6. Does not believe directly in the existence of God. The philosophy of Buddhism is associated with it dhyanas and meditation. It claims only Shunya (Vacuum) as the aim of its Mystic practice. Buddhism aims at man's liberation from pain and suffering. Beyond this, Buddhism originally had no specific aims or claims. That is why after Buddha it divided into branches and many Buddhists got reconverted to their original fold i.e. Hinduism.

7. Lord Buddha never performed miracles. May be, it was not in his mission to adopt short term measures to help the people in distress. Most probably he aimed at people being relieved of anxieties and sufferings through long practice of the eight fold path, which is of course time consuming, and not instantaneous.

8. Lord Buddha never lost his temper.

9. Lord Buddha while preaching with other bhikshus would knock at a number of doors to collect food. Of course he or they would not hoard just enough to satisfy their hunger.

19.17.5 Bhagawaan Ji as a Jivan Mukhta

A sage is said to be in a Jivan-Mukhta state or Sahaj state if he is cramped in a body yet unidentified with all its needs, its pain and disease. Such a sage is liberated in life itself because the strongest attachment of an individual is with his body from which the sage has freed himself.

From all that I have said so far, it is clear Bhagawaan Ji took up an arduous physical Sadhna to attain Jivan-Mukhta State. While in the body he called his swollen and shrinking limbs as splinters of wood which would turn to ashes one day. In his life time he never showed any symptoms of pain or illness though at times he looked ill. A Jivan-Mukhta saint says, "This body is a nest of troubles, an assembly of flesh and bones, it is a barrier in the cosmic journey. Make use of it but forget about its welfare. The more you care for it the more it will demand keeping you away to attain the real ecstasy. The pain, disease or hunger can never supersede the time of your departure from this world. You are a tool in the hands of time and space".

In the Jivan-Mukhta State Bhagawaan Ji was freed of all persistent tensions and the ego. He was free from all the anxieties and frustrations ever enjoying the nectar of Divine bliss and in constant communion with Param-Brahma. Sh. Rama Krishna Paramhansa, a victim of chronic throat cancer never healed him self, though with his miracles he cured people on the death bed and instantly removed all the signs of fatal diseases.

A Jivan-Mukhta sage like Bhagawaan Ji would invite Devas while the sacred fire was on to make them share a portion of his prasada. In fact all deities were at his beck and call.

At times he would bless his disciples with the material darshan's of Holy Jagat Ambha. The characteristics of Jivan-Mukhta were clearly visible in the life of Bhagawaan Ji. Being in full communion with Param-Brahma he referred to himself in the plural. The Upanishad says. " When all the desires of heart are fulfilled, then even a mortal becomes immortal", not to speak of a sage like Bhagawaan Ji who never nurtured a worldly desire in his heart.

A Jivan-Mukhta is liberated in life itself though the momentum of his past Karmas may sustain his physical life for some time. Vidara Mukhti that is liberation after death is a natural consequence of this.

19.17.6 *Bhagawaan Ji as Sthir Man*

(Stability of Mind)

Lord Krishna says in the Holy Bhagwad Gita:

When a person completely abandons all cravings of mind and feels quite contented and satisfied in own self through his own self then he is called a stable mind.

The Saint who has perfectly integrated joy and sorrow, pain and pleasure, where thirst for desire is altogether vanished and who is free from passion, fear and anger is a stable mind. While in the body un- attached to every thing, neither rejoices after meeting with good nor grieves when an evil comes is a stable mind.

Self controlled mind though it enjoys various sense objects through the senses remains free from likes and dislikes, attains stability of mind. As waters of different rivers enter an ocean the ocean remains absolutely undisturbed, like-wise in a stable mind all the enjoyments merge themselves without an expression of any change or utterance of a word. Even if fully acquainted with cosmic conscience, the sage like the ocean, remains absolutely undisturbed; such a sage is stable mind.

Having gone through all the above experiences Bhagawaan Ji is in total harmony and contact with the Supreme self. The Lord endowed him with great powers of futurology clairvoyance and instant means to heal any and solve problems of his devotees. He is in contact with the supreme lord and also his devotees by speech and thought transference. At will he can materialize simultaneously at various places to bestow his benign grace and bliss on his disciples.

A Great Sage says:

It is easy to ride a mad elephant, to tame a ferocious tiger, to play with a Cobra, to be ever youthful, to walk on fire and water, but it is difficult and more beneficial to control the elusive mind and to divert its activities to the most supreme, omnipotent and omniscient God. The mind once controlled is controlled for ever. Shri Ramana Maharishi teaches that one should constantly ask oneself "Who Am I?". The greatest enquiry indeed, by strongly rejecting other thoughts the devotees will find himself going deep into an abyss and the other thoughts will cease to exist. The practical example is that of Dr. Paul Brunton, an English journalist and an author when he entered the Maharishi's chamber at Arunachala. The master simply said, "Go, come tomorrow and just think with full concentration - who am I? and let me know your answer." Thus arousing spiritual curiosity in the author, he elevated him until he was blessed with eternal knowledge.

Source: **Patrika**

20.0 KASHKAK

"All found solace and comfort in his presence"

G.N. Raina



Kashkak

Manigam, the silent sleepy village in the north of Kashmir, about 25 kilometres from Srinagar, which had been hallowed in the late 17th century by Mata Rupa Bhawani during the days of her early penance, produced in the early part of this century a gem of a Faqir, a Mastana, who led a normal life of a Grahasta, and, earned his bread by tilling whatever little land he possessed till the end of his life.

As one crossed VAYIL bridge on the outskirts of the tiny village, one came across a well-built, thinly dressed peasant engaged in ploughing the field. This was the divine figure of the mystic-saint popularly known as Kashkak. A mere darshan brought comfort and solace to one and all who have had the good fortune of visiting him. Small wonder, then, that those who thronged Manigaam day in and day out for Kashkak's darshan included not only the common men, women and children, the rich businessmen, and top government officials, seeking divine favours, but also contemporary saints and sages of Kashmir and the rest of the country. Meher Baba, that silent sage from Poona who was declared an Avatar by his followers, visited Kashkak and accepted Prasad from him. Recording the reminiscences of his meeting with the Manigaam seer, Meher Baba says in his famous work on Saints, "The Wayfarers", that he found Kashkak ever engrossed in Higher self in the 7th plane of Consciousness.

I know of two other contemporary saints - Swami Nandlal Ji and Swami Lakshman Joo, who had darshan of the sage of Manigaam.

Initiated into the Yogic Sadhana by his Guru, Narain Bhan, Kashkak attained Siddhi sooner than expected. Once in a trance, he is said to have climbed a tree wearing Khadaoon, (wooden slippers). Known for his uncanny prophesies, he did appear to have used spiritual powers in the service of God's creatures. It was said of him that he never disappointed anyone and fulfilled everyone's wishes. Once, I vividly remember, a Gujar with his right arm fractured came to Kashkak and implored, "Bab (father), this is the harvesting season, and down and out as I am, my family will die of starvation if I am not alright. Be kind and heal my arm". The sage touched the fractured arm and it was restored to normal health. The Gujar sped away in joy, but an elderly Muslim, sitting alongwith others, including myself, was not happy. Turning to Kashkak, he asked, "why on earth Bab, should you have been so kind to a person who is known for his cunning?" "We are here to serve and do good, simplify matters rather than complicate them. If his arm was not cured, his family would have suffered for no fault of theirs. If, indeed, the Gujar is a bad man, he will have to go through the hell again after the harvesting season", the sage replied. As I learnt later, the Gujar had to go through normal medical process long after the harvesting season.

Kashkak's predictions were often shrouded in ambiguity, made more so by his reciting Persian couplets. To a query as to when a particular gentleman who had accompanied me, my father and mother to the saint in the summer of 1942, would get married, Kashkak replied, " Yora Gachhith ta Tora Yith", meaning " let him die first and then be reborn". The said gentleman from Ali Kadal, now in his 81st year, remains unmarried to this day.

A poor farmer that he was, Kashkak displayed utmost hospitality and those coming from far-off places for his darshan were allowed to stay at night and were served simple meal of rice, curd, dal and vegetables. He treated the rich and poor alike, never discriminated between a Hindu and a Muslim. He always refused offerings in kind or cash. Whatever was offered used to be thrown by him in the Sindh river that flowed nearby.

Kashkak attained Mahasamadhi on 17th of August, 1961.

Source: Koshur Samachar

21.0 NAND BABH THE OMNISCIANT

Justice Janki Nath Bhat & Prithvi Nath Razdan (Mahanoori)
Edited by: Prof. Gopi Kishen Muju



Swami Nand Lal (Nand Babh ji) 1896-1973

Who is there in Srinagar who has not seen at one time or the other, a quick-walking, queer-looking nimble man with a big hat on his head and a tight belt round his waist, taking long strides in quick succession along the streets of the city and elsewhere ?

This thin tall man, with a big walking stick in one hand and a bunch of papers in another, was none other than late Swami Nand Lal Ji of Nunar Village. A couple of his devout disciples who followed him often found it hard to keep pace with him. Son of Raj Guru of Maharaja Amar Singh, Shri Shanker Sahib and his wife Subadhra Ji, Swami Nand Lal Ji shifted his residence from Purshyar, Habba Kadal, Srinagar to Nunar Village, near Ganderbal enroute to Tullamulla, to live with his brother who was adopted by his maternal aunt there. He was employed in the police department and posted at Ladakh. His return from Ladakh proved to be a turning point in his life. He took to spiritualism and became a mystic saint.

A large number of outstanding miracles are attributed to him. Some of these miracles are described in the following pages. The writer was deeply impressed by the spontaneous display of love and affection shown towards Swami Ji's mortal remains invariably by all sections of people irrespective of caste and creed, the high and the low alike while these were being carried

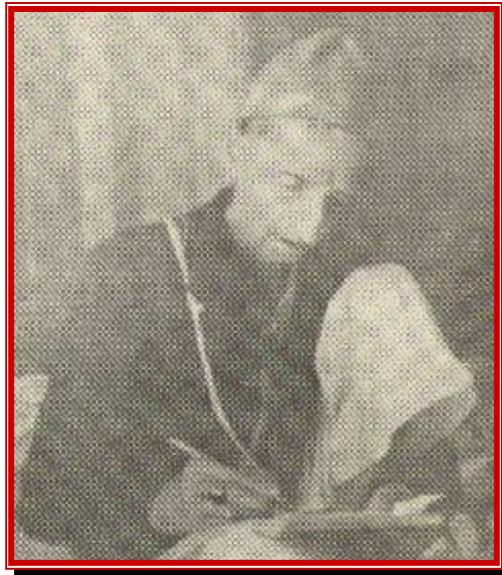
through the city to the cremation ground at Karan Nagar, Srinagar in an elegantly decorated truck. Pedestrians, householders, shopkeepers ranking the road stood up in reverence showering flowers, small sugar balls (shirin) etc. on it in plenty as a mark of deep rooted respect for the departed soul.

He showered his munificence on all and sundry who went to him. There were no barriers of caste, creed, colour or religious beliefs in his holy Darbar. Members of all communities flocked to him and were equally benefitted with his spiritual bliss. He saw one of his pious Muslim admirers rise to the highest office of his choice and when their time came to part with this mundane world for good, he said to him (the disciple) " Dear one, we have to go home now ". Pointing to himself and to his devout Muslim disciple, he said to him, "Two coffins are needed, one for you and one for me" . What a prophecy. Soon the Muslim admirer died and Swami Ji flowed him due course. Reference to a coffin for Hindu looked odd at the time. But on his demise in 1973, at New Delhi, Swami Ji's mortal remains had to be embalmed and put in a coffin before being flown to Srinagar for final rites.

21.1 Swami Nandlal

The Clairvoyant - "Lived in a world of omniscience and spiritual ecstasy"

J. N. Bhat



Swami Nandlal

Swami Nandlal, who was endearingly called Nandabab, strode the spiritual scene of Kashmir for well over 50 years till he received Mukthi on October 30, 1973. Nandabab had acquired a clairvoyance which could not only read the present and the past, but could even predict events to come. To all appearances he behaved like a man out of his wits, quaintly dressed and muttering incoherently which made no sense for those uninitiated in his ways. But every word that he uttered was pregnant with deep meaning and was of great consequence for those who sought his blessings. If he chose he would relieve the faithful who sought his protection from the mundane trials and tribulations that momentarily afflict every individual and disturb his or her equilibrium.

21.1.1 Great Seer

Swami Nandalal was one in the line of great seers which the valley of Kashmir has produced over the centuries. Originally coming from village Nunar near Ganderbal, he rarely stayed in his house, although a new one was constructed for him by his devotees.

Wherever Nandabab lived, he would be mobbed by people of all faiths right from dawn to midnight to seek blessings. Even people from foreign lands would go to him. He would seldom talk directly to any person present in the audience. He would address one person whereas it was a reply to the unrevealed personal queries in the mind of another person also present there. He would talk in parables, similes, paradoxes, metaphors; sometimes he laughed, sometimes sang, but generally he would be dictating something or the other to anyone present on chits or in a register kept for this purpose. The writings on these chits or in the register would usually be replies to the mental queries and problems of the different members of the audience or other matters of general public importance, but all these were in metaphorical language.

21.1.2 Indifferent to Diet

About his cleanliness, Nandabab would be very particular. He would bathe every morning, comb his hair and sometimes apply oils also. But he was totally indifferent to diet, which would generally be light. It did not matter whether you offered him varieties of meat or other dainty preparations or just one vegetable. He would take a little from the preparations presented to him, leaving the rest to be distributed amongst the audience. He usually had a small Katori with vermilion (Sindoor) which he would paste on the foreheads of people present, irrespective of their faith or origin. But he would never offer any food from his Thali, or affix the holy mark on anybody whom he intuitively felt would not like it. Once a Muslim friend persuaded me to accompany him to the saint for getting something done through his miraculous powers. When the saint began to offer the left-overs from the food of his Thali to people assembled there, my friend whispered to me that he would not like to take it. Curiously enough, Nandabab did not call him at all to have one. On another occasion, another Muslim friend whom I carried to the saint to get a complicated problem of his solved (which was, of course, solved exactly on the date that Nandabab predicted) requested me that the Tilak may not be applied on his forehead. While asking all the members of the audience to get the holy mark affixed on their foreheads Nandabab did not call him.

In the hierarchy of Siddhis a stage comes when a spiritual aspirant gets a vision of the universe and through his mind's eye sees the past, present and even the future with perfect accuracy. At this stage, it is said that the spiritual aspirant is all powerful; he cannot only foresee things but can also mould the course of events. Accomplished saints seldom take recourse to this display of power. According to them, Nature must have its own course and they would not interfere with the same, so much so that, even being all powerful, they themselves suffer from ordinary human ailments, diseases, etc. which they could easily get rid of.

21.1.3 Siddhi

Nandabab also had passed that stage or Siddhi of spiritual evolution when a seer acquires the power of clairvoyance. He could enumerate problems and make prophesies - personal, social and political - with accurate precision. Suffice it to say that he could read the mind of people around him and understand their problems; sometimes offer solutions also. But he would take particular care of those whom he considered to be his main devotees or, in his own words, who were under his banner (Alam).

Nandabab could and did predict the rise and fall of various governments. As another mystic of Kashmir had told me, Nandabab was in the spiritual field 'the defence minister' of Kashmir with

a whole host of other mystics, unknown and unidentifiable, working under him on different grades and posts. Later on, his jurisdiction extended to India also. I shall mention only two or three instances which, apparently unbelievable, are nonetheless true.

In 1965, when Pakistan invaded Kashmir, Nandabab was staying in the house of one of his disciples, the late Pandit Balkak Dhar. He started burning a huge fire and kept awake the whole night, sometimes weeping, sometimes laughing and sometimes crying. In the morning, I met him and he said that the previous night was the most difficult one for him. "They wanted to invade the airport", he said, "and I had to fight hard for changing their route". What transpired later was that actually Pakistani raiders had made all attempts during the previous night to capture the airfield but had failed. When a sabre jet of Pakistan flew over Srinagar, he was performing a Havan; people felt panicky but he reprimanded them and assured that nothing would happen. When he was pressed further by queries he got a little irritated and said, "I have told you; should I give you in writing on a stamp paper?"

21.1.4 Unpredictable

Nandabab's movements would be unpredictable. He would leave his residence usually in a car or taxi (sometimes in a Tonga also) and direct the driver to carry him to one place or the other. This trip would continue for days and cover various cities and stations. Once in Jammu he took a taxi for Delhi. On the way, the petrol tank of the taxi became dry and it stopped. Nandabab asked the driver why he had stopped the -vehicle. The driver informed him that the taxi had run out of petrol. The reply was if he had any water, he should pour it into the petrol tank. The poor driver, more out of awe for the saint, poured water into the tank. The taxi started straight-away. It reached Delhi without any petrol in its tank. This incident was narrated to me by the taxi driver himself.

From Delhi, Nandabab took a train to Bombay. There he directed his host to carry him to Santa Cruz Airport. When he reached the airport, a plane had taken off carrying Mrs. Indira Gandhi, the then Prime Minister, to some foreign country. A bomb scare was spread and the plane returned to the airport. Mrs. Gandhi took a different plane and continued her journey. Nandabab told his companions that he was very much worried till the plane took off and his task was over nothing more nothing less. He returned to his headquarters and then back to Kashmir.

21.1.5 Basic Principle

All religions preach the same basic principle: that the ultimate goal is God or self-realization. True saints have always had this universal approach. Nandabab also had the same universal approach; to him all the people, from any part of the world, were the same. He would show no preference for the high-ups nor would he treat common people with less consideration. He was always smiling and never in a pensive mood. He was living in a real world of omniscience and spiritual ecstasy which is far above the physical world, as Pandit Gopi Krishna has put it:

"The mystic gains a new power of perception which persists even in dreams. In every state of being eating, drinking, talking, working, laughing, grieving, walking or sleeping he dwells in a rapturous world of light. He is always conscious of his luminous glow not only in his interior, but pervading the whole field of his vision during the hours of his wakefulness. He lives in a world of light and burning in his interior, filling him with a new luster so beautiful and so ravishing. Light, both within and without, and a distinct music in his ears, are the two prominent features of his transformed being". In this state did live this Godman, Nandabab.

21.1.6 Multiple Personality

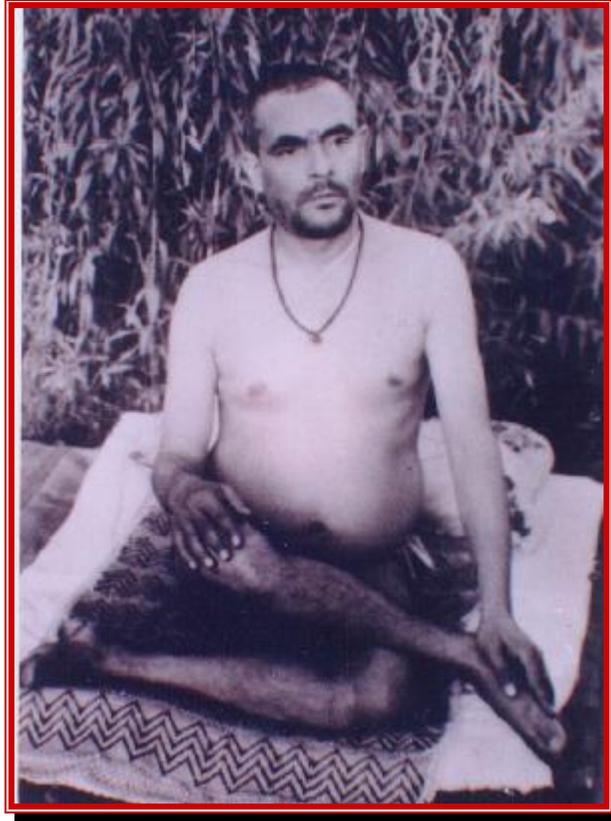
Nandabab had a double or multiple personality. With his nearest disciples, his behavior usually was that of a normal human being; he would talk about their personal matters, advise them on their family affairs and listen to them with patience and affection. But otherwise he would appear to be in his super world, he would not reply straight to a question or a request. A distant relation of mine, a government servant, was involved in a criminal case. He came to me a number of times so that I would speak to the Subordinate Judicial Officer seized of the case. I was a Judge of the High Court then. I would not do it. One day when Nandabab was at my residence, the gentleman came and became a part of the audience. I narrated his problem to Babjee and added that though he (Bab) was kind to me, I had never asked him for anything personal. I craved his favor to help the man. No reply. I repeated the request a second time and a third too, yet not a word in reply, nor did he care to look at the supplicant. But a fortnight later the accused was acquitted, much against all calculations and expectations.

But Nandabab was very particular that those whom he regarded as his own or, in his words, who were under his banner (Alam), should not take shelter under any other spiritual leader. He was jealous of them and would see that his flock remained intact. With all this, whole mankind was his family. In his madness there was a method, in his ramblings was deep philosophy, in his wanderings the discharge of his political responsibilities, in his reveries and prayers the solicitude of the needy, the diseased and his devotees. He was celestial, he was benevolent, he was magnanimous and above all he was universal. In GMY'S words, he was a "flower who was born to blush unseen and waste his fragrance on the desert air".

Source: Koshur Samachar

22.0 SWAMI NAND LAL JI

S.K. Kaul

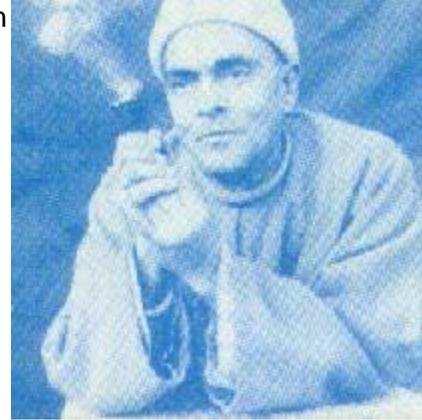


Swami Nand Lal Ji

Swami Nand Lal Ji was born in the year 1902 at Gurgari Mohalla, Zaina Kadal Srinagar. His father, Pandit Sahaj Kaul, belonged to a well-to-do Kaul family, also known as "Kothdars". Swami Ji's fore-fathers were prominent bankers; they were bankers even to Maharaja Pratap Singh. They were ardent devotees of Goddess Jagadamba Sharika Devi. Be it the pleasant summer or cold winter, both males and females in the family would go for Parikrama to the Holy Mother at Hari-Parbat. Swami Nand Lal Ji's mother died very young, leaving behind her two sons and one daughter and it was the beginning of the orderly yatra for Swami Ji towards the goal which he had left halfway in his previous Janama. His step-mother was his first Guru whose way of life had forced the great saint of this century to adopt the Godly way.

In his youth, Swami Nand Lal Ji was very energetic and would command his fellow companions as is the case with a normal rich youth. His friend - late Pandit Naranjan Nath Ji Kaul, who was his cousin brother also, and Late Pandit Sham Lal Ji Sapru (Bad Toth) were his juniors in the school and he used to dominate over them. Swami Nand Lal Ji himself studied up to 8th class in that school. Both of them later turned into his ardent devotees when Swami Ji became a perfect Yogi. Swami Ji had left for his Sadhana at the age of 17 or 18 years after starting some business for a brief period of just a year and a half. Thereafter, young Swami Ji was not traceable for a long period of almost twenty years. Once he left his parental house, he never looked back.

Swami Nand Lal Ji was a brahmachari and was incarnated with sainthood by His Holiness Swami Lal Ji of Banaras. Swami Lal Ji, a great yogi, was so much impressed with the deeds of his shishya that at one point of time, he would offer his Aasana to him, which the latter would not accept as it is not right in the Guru-Shishya relationship. Swami Lal Ji is said to have observed that Swami Nand Lal Ji had done great Kirya in the shortest possible time; it had taken Swami Lal Ji a couple of years of Sadhana to master it. Swami Ji's way of life and Sadhana had left a lot of impact on his Guru Maharaj. Swami Lal Ji would often say: "Baot bane gi wo hi jo Nand Lal ki ichha ho " From the above statement, one can gauge as to what heights Swami Nand Lal Ji had gained in his youth alone.



Swami Nand Lal Ji had done most of his Sadhana in Bomai Sadhamaleun in Sopore, Kashmir. He was very much fond of nature and this had influenced greatly his way of life, be it living, wearing or eating. He was a total vegetarian and was fond of sofiانا music. All singers of repute in this style of music would come and enthrall him by their ragas. After completion of his Sadhana, Swami Ji settled in Sharada town in the Tanghdar area of Kashmir, where he had a small Ashram in the famous shrine of Sharada temple, a place even today called as "Sharada Mai Temple" by the inhabitants of that place, who are mostly gujjars. Swami Ji had a set of local followers who were basically from Tikker Village (Kupwara) and were traders based at Sharada.

It was in the year 1947 when Pakistanis occupied that place that Swami Ji shifted to Tikker village, with his followers, and established his Ashram there on the hill top. It will not be out of place to mention here that at Sharada, when a Sikh gentleman was being followed by Qabailis to kill him, he found refuge in Swami Ji's Ashram. Upon inquiry, that Sikh gentleman mentioned to Swami Ji that he would be killed by the gunmen and begged for his life. While seeking for mercy, the gunmen asked him to come down and face death. The Sikh wept bitterly and begged for life from both. On this, Swami Ji consoled him and advised him not to worry but go down and see what they do. When the Sikh gentleman came down weeping to face the gunman and was asked to stand near the tree and face bullets because he was a "Kafir", God's grace was showered upon him. When they tried to press the trigger of their guns the bullets failed to come out of their guns. After trying thrice, the Qabailies bowed at the feet of Swami Ji and asked for his mercy and so the Sikh gentleman was saved. The Qabailies then beseeched Swami Ji to leave the place as they were aware of what kind of people would follow them into the Valley. Swami Ji ultimately left the place for Tikker. When he was establishing his new Ashram and digging was under process, he advised his devotees not to be afraid if they came across snakes, reptiles and other deadly creatures. His devotees, who were involved in digging and construction work were convinced that the site chosen by Swami Ji appeared to be the place where he had observed Sadhana in his previous birth. Big snakes and reptiles did appear at the site during construction work but left the place without causing any harm to the devotees. While going down under the earth just a few feet, they found a pair of Tongs, a Kangri, a chilum and some rice strewn along the Kangri, a Dhooni with ash and one saligram (Shivalinga) and fresh flowers. While seeing all this, one of his devotees, Pt. Niranjan Nath of a nearby village, who was lame by one leg, looked at Swami Ji in absolute astonishment. At this, Swami Ji repeated these words: *Nera Langyo, kya vanay hal yath jayi kotah chhu mal.*" (How shall I tell you, Nera Lungu, the secrets of this place, how many riches are hidden here). Swami Ji was very fond of using chilum and charas. When these articles were located, he told them to stop there, take out chilum the Kangri, tong and saligram and start filling up the place with bricks and stones for raising the plinth.

One could have a panoramic view of Sharada, as far as Sopore, Handwara and other places from the Ashram hilltop. Swami Ji had also established one more Ashram at Hushoora, near Badgam. His selection of places and his architectural tastes were superb.

While it is difficult to recall all the miracles attributed to Swami Ji, an effort will be made here to mention only a few. Some cannot, however, be narrated as it is neither possible to write about them nor mention about them to any, howsoever near and dear he may be.

At Sopore, some time in 1960-61, when Swami Ji was living in a temple, a poojari came to him screaming that his wife had died. Swami Ji took pity on him and told him not to shout but go to the nearby river Vitasta and bring one small tumbler full of water. When he came back, he was told to sprinkle some water from this tumbler on the face of his wife. After doing exactly as he was directed, he found that after a few minutes, his wife came back to life and is said to have lived longer than her husband.

On another occasion, one of Swami Ji's ardent disciples passed away. While his body was being bathed, he suddenly woke up to the chagrin of people around him. They were virtually frightened to see the dead person coming back to life. The dead devotee, back in life, told them "please, don't be afraid of me, give me some clothes to wear, I will narrate to you the reason of my revival" which he later on did. But since such revelation was not ordered by Swami Ji, the devotee lost his power of speech even though he survived for a long time. This miracle has happened after Swami Ji had attained Nirvana.

Once before leaving for Delhi, Swami Ji stayed at Jawahar Nagar in the house of a devotee. When the 15-year old son of the devotee bowed before Swami Ji as usual in the morning, a thought flashed across his and that the photograph of Lord Shiva adorning the wall was just a fiction. Swami Ji understood the boy's inner thoughts and threw an innocent smile. During the night, when the boy went to bed in his room, where his cousin also slept, at dead of night he suddenly opened his eyes on seeing flashes of light having engulfed the room. Unable to stand the glare, he tried to cover his eyes and head with bed sheets, but the glare flashed even through the sheets. Ultimately, he got up and to his surprise, found Lord Shiva sitting and smiling on a chair with trillions of lights surrounding him. After some time, everything came back to normal. In the morning, he went again to Swami Ji as usual and paid his obeisance at his feet; Swami Ji smiled and asked him whether there was any sense in Lord Shiva's photograph now. The boy prostrated before Swami Ji and begged for his mercy.

Yet another incident concerns one of Swami Ji's devotees working in Revenue Department at Handwara/Sopore. He was to be sentenced for some of his misdeeds and misappropriations by the court. A day before the judgment was to be pronounced, he came to Swami Ji's Ashram and begged for mercy. Swami Ji drew a long puff from his chillum following which a big flash of fire appeared. Swami Ji told him to calm down and forget his worry. To the devotee's luck, the concerned court premises were suddenly engulfed by a ravaging fire, with the entire building and court records being reduced to ashes, thus giving him a reprieve for life.

A Pandit police offer posted in Kupwara used to visit Swami Ji's Ashram in Tikker occasionally after retirement. One day, he had suddenly to be rushed to SMHS Hospital in Srinagar in a very serious condition, accompanied by his wife and some relatives. While the relatives left, his wife was alone in the hospital attending on her husband. During the night, the patient suddenly died and his wife cried and screamed. After confirming that the patient had died, doctors shifted the dead body surprisingly showed signs of life to the utter bewilderment of his wife, who was not prepared to accept the fact of a dead body coming back to life. She was convinced that some evil spirit had overtaken the body of her husband. Watching from a far off distance, she observed the movements of her husband who waived his hand beckoning her, but she refused to go near him. At that moment, a relative arrived early in the morning with some medicines, and

to his utter surprise, saw the body lying outside and came to know from his wife about all that happened during the night. The wife was so frightened that she did not allow even her relative to go near the dead person. Mustering courage, he did go near the body and the person who was back to life, entreated him to take him back home. "I have been granted new life and shall narrate to you all the details at my home", he said. Fully convinced that the person was really alive, he convinced his wife as well and took him home. On reaching home, the revived person asked his relative to pull out a thorn from his foot. It was removed instantaneously and was found to be actually a nail.

The person was thus relieved of acute pain and agony caused by the nail-like thorn. Narrating his ordeal, he said two persons came to him in the Hospital and took him along with them. He was then taken to a hall, which resembled a cinema theatre. There he saw the entire doings of his life recorded and exhibited before him just like a film, which also featured his presence in Swami Ji's Ashram. After being made to watch all this, he was taken to a hill-top by those two persons flanking him on either side. He was surprised to see from this hill-top two views: On one side there were rich gardens and on the other side dense black forest. One of the escorts forced me towards the forest where the thorn stuck to his foot causing severe pain. And, at a distance he saw his revered Swami Ji puffing the chillum. He directed his escorts to take him back and so life was granted to him again, to survive for a long period. The thorn, which looked like an iron nail, was preserved by him till his death.

Swami Ji was very kind at heart and full of love and compassion for his devotees. It is rather difficult to narrate and write about all the miracles that occurred in his life time and continue to happen with his devotees even after his Nirvana. I am reminded of only some incidents that took place in my presence at his Tikker and Hoshura Ashrams from time to time.

Swami Ji would normally ask his devotees and sevaks in the Ashram to prepare more food as some devotees were on way to see him, be it lunch time or dinner time. I have normally seen more than 15 to 20 persons daily having food in his Ashram both in the morning and evening. The Ashram langer was always open and free. He would never accept a penny from anybody nor would he like very important persons to visit him. He shunned exposure and never used his unlimited powers to impress others. His life was scrupulously clean like the nature he loved. One of his disciples, Jai Kishan by name, one day suddenly thought of Brahma, Vishnu and Maheshwar and wanted to know who they were. One evening when the sun had set and the moon was at its zenith, he heard Swami Ji calling Baba Ji (Vibhishan Ji) and directing him to bring some tea for the guests sitting with him. Vibhishan Ji at once brought tea in Samawar with Jai Kishan accompanying him with Khosoos (Cups). Three old Pandits, 80 to 90 years of age, sporting white beards and wearing round turbans with long-armed ancient pherans were seen chatting with Swami Ji. After they had a few sips of tea, Swami Ji directed Jai Kishan to accompany them up to the road down below, about half a mile or so from the Ashram. In deference to Swami Ji's orders, Jai Kishan accompanied the three old Pandits. When he reached the gate of the Ashram a few yards away from where Swami Ji was sitting, he heard Swami Ji calling him. He just looked around for a fraction of a second to verify whether he was actually being called and when he regained his posture, to his surprise he found all the three Pandits missing. Worried, he ran here and there for an hour or so in all directions in their search but all in vain. During the dead of the night he came back to Swami Ji, a broken man as he was after this incident. Finding Swami Ji all smiles, Jaikishan was lost as what he should do now. On this, Swami Ji told him, "don't worry, this is an answer to the question that arose in your mind. You have not realised that they were actually the "Trikot" - Brahma, Vishnu and Maheshwar".

There is an incident when, as per Swami Ji's wishes, his devotees had even to proceed on world tours. Swami Ji one day asked Jai Kishan if he would like to go on a world tour. Nodding his head in affirmative, Swami Ji told him to make preparations. Unexpectedly, on reporting at

his office as usual, he was told that he had been transferred to the security wing in the Prime Minister's office. Normally, a transfer from Civil Aviation to P.M.'s security wing is rather unthinkable and that too with Mrs. Indira Gandhi. She had to visit some countries and travelled by INS Vikrant; Jai Kishan was in the security wing of the Prime Minister.

Swami Ji had prophesied in early 1967 that Kashmiri Pandits were in for a big trouble in the middle of the year. Kashmiri Pandits actually took to streets in August/September 1976 when Swami Ji ordained that a big sacrifice was required to save the community. Swami Ji possessed highest virtues and was secular in his outlook. In Boomai, where Swami Ji stayed for some time, a Muslim by the name of Mohammed Gosain one day saw Swami Ji sitting in naked form with Trishul in hand travelling on the back of Nandi. He immediately became his ardent devotee. Another Muslim came to Swami Ji one day and told him that his cow was not giving milk any more. He was directed to go with a pot to the cow and tell her to give some milk for Nand Lal. He followed the directions and uttered the same lines before the cow while placing the pot near her and she at once started milking.

There is yet another interesting incident in my knowledge. In Hoshura, a young Pandit boy who was working in the Air Force wished to get himself recruited as a volunteer in Congo. Swami Ji asked him, "Congo alone, why not a World tour?" This boy was later selected and given the assignment of a Driver in the army by the Congo Govt. His office was strategically located near the Airport where a number of aeroplanes were taking off and landing. One day, he was deputed on loading supervision and while doing so, he himself by mistake, boarded a plane unmindful of the wrong that he had committed. This flight's first destination was Washington, followed by other cities and its return was after one month. While coming out of the aeroplane, the officials concerned discovered a passenger alongwith the cargo and detained him at the airport. After interrogation, the Indian Embassy was approached.

After verifying and ascertaining his identity, he was issued with a temporary passport and visa and kept with the Embassy staff for a week or so. During this period he got a chance to see some parts of USA. Thereafter, he was put on board again; the plane reached Brazil with a halt there for a couple of days and then moved to few other countries, before going back to Congo. While disembarking from the Aircraft, he was handed over a dismissal letter, his dues and a ticket back to India. This gentleman, after 'this world tour', came back to India and was serving as a Postmaster when I saw him last.

I would like to mention two more miracles, which happened in addition to the countless I have myself felt.

Swami Ji blessed a lady whose husband had left her and was living abroad. Under what circumstances he came back and could not go back thereafter, was a miracle one is astounded with. This man is now living happily in India with his family. Talking about an incident involving me personally, I was in 1965 appearing in my Matriculation examination in the Physics paper. I had stealthily placed small but thin question-answer series book inside my answer book and thus started copying. The invigilator, becoming very suspicious, came to my desk and started looking at me. In his presence, as is natural, I could not write anything, which made him more suspicious. He at once got hold of my answer book and said, "are you copying?" At that time, I remembered Swami Ji and boldly told him, "no, I am not". He opened my answer book page by page and, to my surprise, I neither saw the book, which I had concealed in my answer book, nor could he find anything objectionable there. He gave the answer book back to me and I once again started copying without any tear. Thereafter, the invigilator never came to my seat so long as the whole examination lasted. After the examinations, it was a routine for me to go to Swami Ji and stay in the Ashram. This time I stayed for more than a fortnight. One day in the morning hours, Swami Ji was puffing the chilum and I sat in front of him solely praying for my success in

the Matric examination. Swami Ji smiled at me and I bowed my head, feeling a little shy. Then he told me "do you remember when the invigilator checked your answer book: where had that book gone from which you were copying". I had no alternative except to bow my head further in shame. Then he told me as to who saved me and how all this happened. I became deaf and dumb for a moment and could not stand up till he ordered me to get up and bring some water for him to drink. Thereafter, Swami Ji continued to shower his grace upon me and his other beloved ones. As I have mentioned earlier, Swami Ji's miracles continue to take place even after his Nirvana insofar as his devotees are concerned. He is omnipresent and always available to guide his ardent seekers.

His Holiness Swami Ji attained Nirvana in January 1966 on the day of Gauri Triteya at New Delhi in the house of his beloved shishya, Pandit Prem Nath Sadhu at Malviya Nagar. Swami Ji has a long list of devotees whom he had incarnated in his life time and some of whom were incarnated after his Nirvana.

Swami Ji had nominated Shri Vibhishan Ji, Kral Bab Maharaj and Mast Ram Ji as his successors. Vibhishan Ji is presently at Bordi in his Ashram, a great soul who has conquered all Siddhis. Swami Kral Bab Ji, one of the dearest chelas of Swami Ji, expired a couple of years back and has an Ashram in Gaddi Udhampur. Swami Mast Ram Ji is extremely busy in spreading the name of his Guru Maharaj and has a great following. His Ashram is in Jammu, Karala Delhi and at Haridwar. The Ashram at Haridwar has space enough to accommodate as many as 2000 people at a time and anybody can use the premises free of cost for Yatra purposes.

Before concluding I must make a mention about Swami Sedhmol (Vedha Lal). He was a family man who was first incarnated by Swami Ji and given the name of Sedhmol, followed by Swami Sham Lal Jee Sapru, popularly known as 'Bad Toth'. Both Sedhmol and Bai Toth were the seniormost disciples of His Holiness Swami Nand Lal Ji Maharaj and both have contributed a lot towards the welfare of our community. Both of them, like their Guru Maharaj, possessed immense miraculous powers and always shunned publicity.

[The author, who resides at T-48, Sector-12, NOIDA, has had the privilege to see Swami Ji very closely right from the age of ten years, beginning from 1958- 59 to 1967-68].

Source: Koshur Samachar

23.0 KWAJA LASSA SAHIB

"Hindus Saw Omkar Swarup in Him"

In the first part of this century, it was a common sight for the people of Kashmir to see a Muslim Saint roaming on the streets of Srinagar, with a loose long gown (PHIRAN) hanging down his shoulders. This was Khwaja Lassa Sahib of Nowhatta, Srinagar. He used to carry a Kangri (Kashmiri firepot) with live charcoal on his left shoulder, held in place by his arched hand. This shoulder was sporting a big scar caused by the firepot but he was utterly indifferent to it. He spent his time in his own house and fed people yellow colored rice, green Qahwa (Kashmiri Tea without milk or ' Sheer Chai' (Tea with milk and salt). He would sometimes be seen in grave yards or other places of wilderness or on occasions visit people's houses asking for tea or a rice meal.

He had tremendous spiritual power and this is characteristic example of that. Lassa Sahib would usually pick up some loaves of bread from a bakery on his own. On one occasion, when he began to collect a couple of loaves from a Bakery owned by some Ramzana near Nowhatta, the owner resisted him. This defiance enraged Lassa Sahib who thundered thus - "Sit down Ramzana, sleep down Ramzana and Die Ramzana". The surprised owner who was out to manhandle him, sat down, fell off to sleep and died. The owner's wife who had always welcomed the Saint in the shop tried hard to locate the Saint and seek pardon for her husband but the Saint was not to be found and the body was buried.

After the year 1931, when political disturbances rocked Kashmir, the Saint was seen sitting on shops slowly preparing skins out of big mix of yarn which would take a long time to clear. This was interpreted to mean that Kashmir situation symbolized mixed up yarn which was in turmoil and he was patiently processing it to restore normalcy. That was what exactly happened.

On another occasion another great Saint Swami Sona Kak Ji gave a rupee to one Shri Nand Lal Gorkha to purchase Charas for him. While Nand Lal was returning from the shop, Charas in hand, he encountered Lassa Sahib who snatched it away. Shri Nand Lal was nonplused, fearing trouble from Swami Sona Kak. However he purchased a new lot for one rupee. As soon as he reached the house Swami Sona Kak came out to receive him and embraced him saying how Lassa Sahib who is an "Omkar Swarup" Saint had accepted it. He blessed Nandlal for being instrumental in giving Charas meant for him to Lassa Sahib. This was a high stage of his evolution.

One renowned Unani Physician of Kashmir Shri Sahaj Bhat, who was a philosopher and a saintly person was one day going along a street to treat a patient near Nowhatta adjacent to the hillock of Sharika Bhagawati. An idea crossed his mind that Sharika Bhagawati was not as great as Sri Raginya Bhagawati of Tulamula, who was his titular deity. He was immersed in this thought when he encountered Lassa Sahib, who picked up a stone and facing the Hakim said "they are all equal, neither of them is higher or lower". The Hakim Sahib found the answer and realized his mistake. Lassa Kak threw away the stone and went his way.

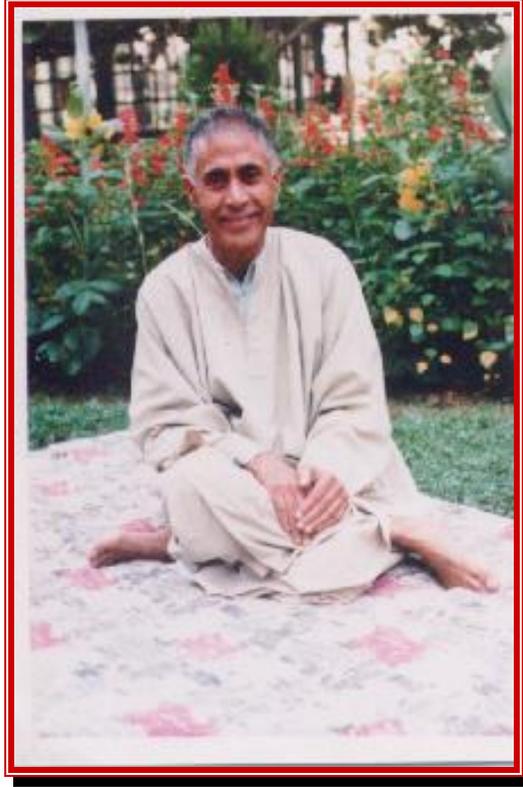
He gave up his mortal coil in 1348 (Hijri) when he was about 75 years old.

Swami Sona Kak in his earlier years used sometimes to go to see him and hold secret meetings with him. When the news of Lassa Kak's passing away reached Swami Sona Kak, he tore off his clothes as a token of high reverence and expression of grief over his parting and exclaimed that "Badshah had passed away". He did not take his usual rice meal for six months after Lassa Sahib's departure but subsisted on milk, tea and fruits.

Lassa Sahib was the son of one Sudra Bhat of Nowhatta Srinagar who had renounced the world.

Source: **Koshur Samachar**

24.0 SWAMI LAKSHMAN JOO



Swami Lakshman Joo

24.1 Swami Lakshman Joo

"The call of the spirit proved irresistible"

G.N. Raina

Kashmir Shaivism has penetrated to that depth of living thought where diverse currents of human wisdom unite in a luminous synthesis.

- Rabindranath Tagore

Saivism in Kashmir, as distinct from Southern Shaivism, synthesizes essential things that are to be found in almost all the six systems of Indian philosophy and stamps it with the personal experiences and observations of its exponents.

Right from the founder of Shaiva system, Vasugupta who, as revealed to him in a dream, found SIVASUTRAS, (he later authored), inscribed on a rock called SHANKER PAL (Shankar's rock) in the forest in the lap of the sacred Mahadev mountain, through Kallata Bhatt, Somananada, Utpaladeva and that profound thinker, Abhinavgupta, down to Swami Ramji and Swami Lakshman Joo, in our own times, an attempt, and a successful one at that, has been made at intelligent synthesis of all that is abiding, universal and enduring in VEDANTA, SANKHYA, NYAYA, VAISHESHIKA, VAISHNAVA and SHAKTA and even in Buddhist teachings.

Little wonder, therefore, Kashmir Shaivism has attracted the attention of many eminent thinkers and scholars who consider it more synthetic and profound than all the other known works on religious philosophies of the world. And for this no small credit goes to Rajanaka Lakshmana

(Swami Ishwara Swarupji), popularly called Lakshman Joo whose exposition of the Saiva texts was backed by his personal experiences and, therefore, went home to the scholars and students coming from all parts of India and the world. We were fortunate to have had an advanced Yogi like him walking and moving amongst us as a living vibrating Truth.

It is only when you met him, as I did for an interview in 1971, that you would feel his irresistible charm emanating from that sweet child-like innocence which hid from our naked eye his spiritual and philosophic attainments. As a man, he was upright, humble and very generous. Hundreds and thousands flocked to him for succor and he was not found wanting in this respect. Many an afflicted found solace in his presence.

Swami Lakshman Joo was born on 9th May, 1907 (Vaisakha Krishna Dwadasi), Thursday, at 4 p.m., in Srinagar, Kashmir. His father, Shri Narayandas Raina, the first man to have introduced house-boats in Kashmir, and his mother, Shrimati Aranyamali, were greatly devoted to Swami Ramji, who was their family GURU and who had by then become their Spiritual teacher also. Swami Ramji was the greatest exponent of SHAIVA-AGAMA and he was also a Siddha Purusha. Many stories are current about his Siddhis. It is said that he had only to look at or touch a person and he was bound to be a changed man. Shri Narayandas had built a separate house for him where he could carry out his Sadhana and teach the Saiva texts to his pupils. This is now known as Rama-Trika-Saivashrama, located in Fatehkadal, not far from the ancestral home of Swami Lakshman Joo.

As soon as the news of the birth of Swamiji was conveyed to Swami Ram, he literally danced in joy and exclaimed: "I am called Rama, let the child be called Lakshman". How prophetic Swami Ram was! Subsequent events proved that Swami Lakshman Joo was to Swami Ram what Vivekananda was to Sri Ramakrishna Paramhansa.

Lakshman Joo did show his leanings towards the higher life in early childhood. At the age of three, his play consisted in making a Shiva-linga out of clay for worship. At five, he would sit down for meditation and in this condition, he would exhibit signs of abnormal behavior which worried his parents. They approached Swami Ram who said, 'This boy was a great Yogi in his past life. His Yoga

would be consummated in this life". Lakshman Ji's childhood was spent under the spiritual care of this great sage, Swami Ram who taught him the Japa of Gayatri Mantra and also certain Yogic exercises according to the Saiva discipline. Before Swami Ram took Mahasamadhi, he entrusted his disciples and the seven-year-old Lakshman to the charge of his principal disciple, Mahtab Kak who later taught Saiva Sastras to Swamiji.

In school also, Swamiji used to go into Samadhi now and then. One of his inquisitive teachers once asked him what he noticed in the state of absorption, to which he replied in Kashmiri that he experienced "BADA BODA", the highest, the supreme. Yet another teacher asked him to do physical exercises. Instead, Lakshman collected a group of students and sang Bhajans. Enraged, the teacher inflicted 25 cane strokes on him for defiance. Next day, it is said, the teacher fell ill and had fever exactly for twenty- five days.

At 13, his parents thought of arranging his matrimony (as was the custom those days of marrying quite early). But Lakshman's reply in the negative was firm and emphatic. When he was in pre-matriculation, his father fell ill and he was asked to look after his business. He had to give up his studies. As he was now free from the routine work of the school, he devoted most of his time to the study of the Saiva Sastras from Mahtab Kak. He devoted even greater time to the practice of Yoga, for he did not want to confine himself only to the theoretical part of the Saiva system. He used to practice Yoga from two in the night to dawn.

It was at the age of 20, as he told me, that he had the experience of self-realization for the first time. And the time was 4 a.m. (Brahma Muhurat). After this, he used to go into Samadhi even while he was in his workshop. He now lost all interest in business, for which he was reprimanded by his father. Inner struggle ensued and finally the call of the Spirit proved to be irresistible. He bowed to the Inner Monitor, as it were, and left home with only a lion's skin for sitting. A search for him followed but without success. His brothers, however, found on a piece of paper the following note left behind by the boy Lakshman: "My dear brothers, I am leaving in search of the Supreme. Kindly take care of my parents". After frantic telegrams and telephonic messages and even report to the police about the missing boy, his father received the following message from a relative in Sopore: "This morning I saw Lakshman going on foot to Sadhuganga Ashram". The parents rushed to Sopore where they found the boy seated on the lion's skin in deep meditation near a spring in a jungle. When he returned to normal consciousness, he told his parents that he could no more live in the home. His father promised to build for him an Ashram in an unfrequented place in Srinagar itself.

Lakshman Joo, meanwhile, lived in a village, Danyahama in Harvan, near Srinagar. Four months later, his Ashram was completed and he moved into it. It was here that Lakshman Joo made deeper study of Saiva Sastras from the reputed scholar, Maheshwar Nath Razdan, for seven long years. It was at this time, Sharika Devi, daughter of Shri Jialal, approached Lakshman Joo to accept her as- his pupil. She practiced Yoga under his guidance and she was lucky to have self-realization in a few year's time. Overwhelmed by her experience, she lost mental balance for a few years when she had to be moved to her parent's house. Again, it was Lakshman Joo who went to see her, gave her a grape to eat, and then she started improving and in due course, she regained her normal condition. Lakshman Joo also initiated Prabha Ji, the younger sister of Sharika Devi.

In 1934, Lakshman Joo built an Ashram for himself on a site between Nishat and Shalimar Gardens. It was named Isvara Ashram. Sharika Ji's father also built a house for her on a plot of land nearby. While Nature has bestowed picturesqueness on the Ashram, the peace and harmony radiated from the one who hallowed it by his presence, Swami Lakshman Joo.

Swami Lakshman Joo left his mortal frame and merged into the Supreme, Shiva, on 27th of September, Thursday, at Brahma Muhurat. The great master of Kashmir Shaivism that he was, he has taught us that Param Shiva or Supreme Reality is both static and dynamic. The dynamic aspect of Param Shiva is known as Shakti and the entire manifestation is a play of his Shakti. The world is not an illusion as held by Vedanta but an epiphany, an expression of the Divine Shakti. For the average man, the best means for ascent in the spiritual path is to find out a competent Guru whose Grace will lead the aspirant to the Supreme Bliss. And Swamiji has summed it up thus in his own poetic form:

***There is a point twixt sleep and waking,
Where thou shalt be alert without shaking:
Enter into the new world where forms so hideous pass,
They are passing, - endure, do not be taken by the dross.
Then the pulls and the pushes about the throttle,
All those shalt thou tolerate,
Close all ingress and egress; - yawnings there may be;
Shed tears-crave-implore, but thou wilt not prostrate,
A 'thrill' passes, - and that goes down to the bottom;
It riseth, may it bloom forth, - that is BLISS;
Blessed being, Blessed being, - O'Greetings be to Thee.***

Source: **Koshur Samachar**

24.2 Swami Laxman Joo

The Sage of Ishaber

Pandit Jankinath Kaul 'Kamal'

24.2.1 Introduction

Fathers of the Kashmir Monistic Saiva Thought, who flourished in the valley from ninth to thirteenth century A.D., were erudite scholars and eminent saints. They recorded what they practised and accomplished thereby. Later, there were interruptions in this line of thought. and it was mostly the ritualistic faith that kept the tradition alive. After Sivopadyaya, the eighteenth century scholar-saint who wrote commentaries and books of the kind, there appeared saints of the order during nineteenth century. But they, only taught the lore and made no use of pen. Early twentieth century saw the Kashmir of past glory blessed with a son who, not only practised and lived this wonderful philosophy-the Trika Saiva of Kashmir named Pratyabhijna Darsana-but also disseminated its postulates by teaching and writing among the seekers of Truth in the country and among those from foreign lands.

24.2.2 Birth and Initiation

A luminary of the first magnitude on the spiritual firmament of modern times, Lakshmana Raina was born at Namchibal in Srinagar (Kashmir) on May 9, 1907. He showed signs of spiritual fertility from his very birth. Finding the child far too precocious, his noble, god-fearing and devout parents put him in the tutorage of Swami Rama, who had been their family priest, and saint of high order in the tradition of the refined Tantric Monism of Kashmir known as the **Trika** system. From his early childhood Lala Saab cast a spell not only over his parents and relatives but also on Swami Rama. At sixteen, however, the boy was ripe enough for being initiated by Swami Mahtab Kak, who had been commissioned by his illustrious preceptor just before entering mahasamadhi, when the promising Laksmana was only seven years old. The enterprising and well- to-do parents could not prevail upon the young boy, to enter the life of a householder or even to take up a job.

24.2.3 Renunciation and Learning

It was typical of young Lakshmana to take his own time to do things rather than act on the spur of moment and force the pace. He had requested his loving parents to make a place available for him in solitude. But it took them some time to execute the promised plan. Yet the spiritual urge compelled the earnest aspirant to leave home for practising yoga at the famous forest ashrama of Sadha-malyun in Handawara, Kashmir. He left no clue about himself at home except a line on a piece of paper requesting his brothers to give comfort to his parents. Getting the clue after a thorough and anxious search for the young Lakshmana, his father Pandit Narayan Das and his preceptor Swami Mahtab Kak went there to meet him. They succeeded in persuading him to come to the city and accept to live in a newly built house in their factory premises as he had desired. Here the earnest scholar-saint devoted himself to the study of Kashmir Saiva literature available at the Research Department of the Jammu and Kashmir Government started early by Sir Pratap Singh, the then Maharaja of the state. Highly learned Pandits had helped the department in editing and publishing a number of books on Kashmir Saivism, excavated and discovered throughout the state. Lakshmana Joo engaged the most efficient Pandit, Rajanaka Maheshvara to teach him Saiva sastra at home. He also studied Sanskrit grammar and the allied schools of Indian philosophy at full length. He edited the

Bhagavad Gita with its Sanskrit commentary by Abhinavagupta and wrote important footnotes to it. This was published when he was about twenty-five years old.

24.2.4 Seclusion

During the year 1934-35 Brahmachari Lakshmana Joo chose a secluded place at the foot- hill above Ishaber village in the vicinity of the famous Nishat garden. He loved the spot because his ideal teacher Abhinavagupta, one of the most prominent authors of Kashmir Saivism, had lived somewhere around the place in vineyards about nine centuries ago. A bungalow was constructed by his parents at the selected site. It had a spacious garden with multi-colour flower-beds, fruit-bearing trees and a vegetable garden. Adjacent to this spiritual abode Sri Jia Lal Sopori of Srinagar built a house for his daughter Sharika Devi, who, after taking a vow of leading a celibate life, had found her worthy preceptor in Brahmachari Lakshmana Joo. Deviji remained in utter penance for attaining perfection in the monistic Saiva order by learning Agama Sastra from him and practising Saiva-yoga under his care. Devotees and seekers of Truth began to pour in now. It was about this time that the present writers was introduced to this holy man of divine charm by his own master and later recommended for the study of Utpaladeva's masterpiece, Sivastotravali. This marked the beginning of the Sunday class at the ashrama that always remained increasing and surcharged with wonderful spiritual vibrations.

24.2.5 Meeting Ramana Maharishi

Suddenly the young saint made a silent trip to certain places of his own choice in India. He wanted to confer with saints of high order perhaps to ascertain his attainments. He spent some time at Bombay beach to establish his power of spiritual perception. Then spending a very short time with Mahatma Gandhi at Sevagram he rushed to have a glimpse of Sri Aurobindo at Pondicherry where the Mother evinced interest in him. Therefrom he found his way to Tiruvanmalai to meet Ramana Maharishi at the Ramanachramam. Bhagavan Ramana looked at the young attractive saint graciously. It must have been the moment of Drstidiksa-initiation by mere sight. Swami Lakshmana Joo spent some weeks in the presence of the Maharishi. He later expressed: "I felt those golden days were indeed divine". Thus Swamiji revived in 1938 A.D. the spiritual link that united Madras and Kashmir when a monk of Madhurai, named Madhuraja, had travelled to Kashmir in the eleventh century to meet the great Abhinavagupta. Swamiji returned to Kashmir with greater spiritual charm. He then wrote a Hindi translation of the Sambapanecasika, adding important hints as footnotes to it. This was published in 1943.

24.2.6 Aurobindvan Solitude

Swami Lakshmana Joo took to strict seclusion in his own ashrama premises for several months. During that period of 'Aurobindvan solitude', he concentrated on the Kramastotra culled out from the Tantraloka. Giving a wonderful exposition of the twelve forms of Saiva Yoga in lucid Hindi preceded by the original Sanskrit text, this small book of deep insight into the Reality of dvadasakali was published in 1958. Along with his progress in spiritual attainments, Swamiji propagated the Saiva faith so efficiently and effectively that scholars and seekers after Truth got drawn towards him, not only from his own country but also from abroad.

24.2.7 The Ishwara Ashrama

After India was declared a free country, she has virtually remained in shambles, not tidy as before. A sense of insecurity increased day by day in everyone's mind and almost everywhere. In the suspicious circumstances, Swami ji disposed off his immovable property along with that of Sharika Devi ji, about the year 1957 and started to live in a small house newly constructed at a stone's throw from the general road near Gupta Ganga Temple in Ishaber village. 'Ishwara

Ashrama' was the name given to the ashrama and the disciples began to call Swami ji Ishwara Swarupa. (This ashrama is the headquarter of Ishwara Ashrama Trust now).

24.2.8 Ashrama Activities

The Ashrama activities gathered momentum. Swamiji held regular Sunday class/satsanga. On Mondays he observed silence (maunam) and spent his day in 'God's House', the tiny cottage for meditation, built in a beautiful small garden near the previous ashrama-place. A set programme was followed on other weekdays. A spacious lecture hall with cupboards on one side for library and a havana-shala for annual yagya were constructed in the premises of Shri Ranvir Siva Temple, Gupta Ganga by the Dharmarth Trust of Jammu and Kashmir under the trusteeship of Dr. Karan Singh, former union minister and ambassador. The complex was named Kashmir Saiva Pathika. Sunday discourses on Tantraloka by Swamiji, lectures by eminent spiritualists and seminars were held there with grace and glory. Swami ji, at certain occasions gave series of lectures on spiritual topics for the elevation of common people, besides taking special classes and guiding scholars in their research work. Maiden translation with footnotes in Hindi of his favourite book Sivastotravali was published by the Chowkhamba Sanskrit series office, Varanasi in 1964. This Swamiji taught with a new exposition each time.

24.2.9 Honours Conferred

Two saintly persons of Swami ji's calibre, contemporaneous with him, were Pandit Nilakantha Jyotishi (later Swami Nilakanthananda Saraswati, D.L.S., Richikesh) and Pandit Satram Bhat of Ishaber. Although each had a different mode of thought yet the 'spiritual trio' was destined to meet and corroborate on the Yoga-bhumi of Ishaber. They met closely on Brahma-sutra Sankarabhasya and Yogavasistha Maharamayana. Scholars and professors came to Swamiji from the universities of Torino (Italy), Paris, Oxford, and America for his guidance in Pratyabhijna and Tantraloka. To the scholars and his disciples from foreign lands he gave pithy and short lectures on abstruse topics in English. For Kashmiri disciples he explained the tenets of Saivism in a literary style full of elegance and wit. To general audiences he spoke in lucid Hindi. Swami Lakshmana Joo read his paper in Sanskrit on 'Kundalini Vijnana Rahasyam' at the All India Tantra Sammelanam held under the auspices of the Varanaseya Sanskrit University at Varanasi in the year 1965. His exposition of the subject was much applauded by the great luminary Mahamahopadhyaya Gopinath Kaviraj and other scholars of great repute. After some years the Varanaseya Sanskrit University conferred upon Swami Lakshmana Joo the degree of D. Lit.. honoris causa, in recognition of his splendid and valuable service to the cause of Sanskrit. When Swami ji was informed about this, he simply gave an innocent smile and said in an expression of humour "I have become a doctor now". The Jammu and Kashmir Akademi of Art, Culture and Languages presented the robe of honour to Swamiji at a special function while Mir Qasim was Chief Minister of the state.

24.2.10 Contribution

Swamiji's contribution to the promotion of the studies in Kashmir Saivism, propagation of the Trika philosophy and growth of Kashmiri culture will be remembered for long. This considerably helped the revival of this philosophy and way of life which had otherwise been fading away due to political changes in the valley. Swamiji, however, became known nationally and internationally as the best exponent of Trika philosophy. The saint-scholar gained spiritual ecstasy of jivanamukta (liberated while living) and in his own country came to be known as 'the sage of Ishaber' to whom all sorts of people - young and old, male or female - came to pay obeisance and receive blessings or a blissful touch. A reproduction of a few of his lectures in English was published in 1982 under the caption: "Lectures on Practice and Discipline in

Kashmir Saivism." "The Kashmir Saivism - supreme secret" was published in the year 1985. This contains lectures on important topics of Saiva philosophy based on the Pratyabhijna of Utapaladeva and the Tantraloka of Abhinavagupta given by Swamiji to his western disciples. The Pancastavi of Dharmacharya with comprehensive Hindi translation and footnotes was published in the year 1987. Beside these works, some of the texts relating to Kashmir series (K.S.T.S.) were translated for the first time by Thakur Jaidev Singh after they were taught to him by the Master. Jaidev's language reflects in a luminous fashion the mystical experiences in the texts namely Pratyabhijna hrdaya, Siva sutra, Vijnanabhairava and Paratrisika which also bear his elaborate introductions. Swamiji's immense erudition stimulated some more disciples and admirers to expound these Saiva texts. Prof. Nilakanth Gurtoo wrote Hindi translations of Paratrisika and Spandakarika. The present writer, wrote an independent, pithy and up-to-date Hindi commentary on Siva-sutras that was highly praised by the Master. Smt. Kamala Bawa translated the text and commentary of Pratyabhijna hrdayam into Hindi. Smt. Prabha Devi translated into Hindi Para Pravesika, Paramarhasara and Guru Stuti. All these have been published. Dr. Oscar Botto wrote on Abhinavagupta and Tantraloka in Italian and Dr. Lillian Silburn (France) translated some Saiva hymns and certain texts on Saivism into Italian and French respectively. Thus Swamiji taught as well as spread with effective measure this unique philosophy of Kashmir in the country and abroad.

24.2.11 Birthday and Excursions

Swamiji's birthday was celebrated every year on such a grand scale that it turned to be a great fair for common people and an auspicious day for his admirers and devotees who flocked from all parts of the country to have a glimpse of the sage sitting in long samadhi. Indian as well as foreign disciples attended to see this godman 'living free' on this earth. Sri Dinanath Ganjoo, Smt. Kamla Bhagati, Sri Narayan Joo and Smt. Raj Dulari Kaul among many others sang Kashmiri poems of eulogy to their preceptor. This cheerful holyman of wisdom, wit and peace distributed prasada and day long. The next day Swamiji spent in giving gifts to devotees and disciples. Once Swamiji remarked "If I had to celebrate my birthday twice a year I would finish up all my extra property by distributing it."

Excursions to places of sanctity and natural scenery in the valley were occasionally arranged. Kirtans by disciples and discourses by Swamiji were usual features all along. Prominent places visited on large group excursions were: Verinag, Takshakanag, Karkutanang, Sadha-malyun, Uma Nagari, Hangalgund, Tangamarag, Naran-nag (Sindh Valley), Dacchigam and Dara etc. by bus, and different places around and in Dal Lake by dunga (house-boat) during summer besides linger trips to Hardwar and Rishikesh during winter.

Moments of bliss were experienced when saints and men of learning came to meet the sage of Ishaber. Dr. Karan Singh often visited the ashrama to receive blessings. Smt. Indira Gandhi, the former Prime Minister of India sought interview with the sages whenever she came on a visit to the state. Swamiji had a meeting with J. Krishnamurti at Kotarkhana in the Dal Lake. Maharishi Mahesh Yogi visited the Ishawara Ashrama and invited Swamiji to his house-boats in the Dal Lake. Swamiji gave an interesting exposition of the Vijnanabhairava to his devotees on request. Paul Repts, in his short introduction to the chapter 'Centering' says: "It presents 112 ways to open the invisible door of consciousness. I see Lakshmana joo gives his life to its practice". Swami Ramdas (a jivanmukta) of Kanhangarh, Mangalore, Swami Satyananda Saraswati of Munger, and Swami Muktananda of Ganeshpuri were pleased to meet the Swami when they visited Srinagar. Swami Lakshmana Joo himself attended and presided over spiritual meetings held occasionally in the valley and outside it. In 1976 Sri Ramakrishna Ashram, Srinagar (Kashmir) organized a spiritual congregation in the Ashrama precincts. This was graced by the

world famous cultural ambassador of India, Swami Ranganathananda while the meeting was presided over by Swami Lakshmana Joo, who described Sri Ramakrishna as a sidha yogi.

Another time Swami Ranganathananda was invited by Swamiji to address a special meeting of scholars and devotees and declared the chief guest as 'messenger of peace'. Swamiji occasionally went to Hardwar and Rishikesh to meet saints, especially Swami Sivananda Saraswati of the Divine Life Society giving expositions to parallelism of Kashmir Saiva Mysticism with the mysticism of Sankara Vedanta.

24.2.12 Ecstasy

During his years of maturity, Swami Lakshmana joo was writing a comprehensive compendium of Kashmir Saiva Darsana in lucid Hindi. It runs into several chapters. Excerpts from the manuscript were at times read out by him to selected disciples among whom the present writer was fortunate to be one. It is understood that writing of the book remained incomplete but was published later in 1994 by Sri Prabha Deviji. Prof. P.N. Pushp, while writing his foreword to this book titled Trika Rahasya Prakriya has also observed the incompleteness of this work. During his latter days of ecstasy Swamiji only explained selected pithy verses from the Agama sastras and Yogavasistha and sang these alongwith his disciples in divine rapture. These continue to be sung by devotees at Sunday satsang meetings with the wonderful Gurustuti composed early by one of Swamiji's illustrious disciple of Varanasi, Sri Rameshwar Jha, who having studied and practised Vedantic Mysticism had found great interest in the Kashmir Saiva Mysticism and had accepted Lakshmana joo as his preceptor of the Faith.

24.2.13 Occult Powers

Though Swamiji was a master of occult powers, he never made a display of those powers. Swamiji was against their being used as he was convinced that the use of occult powers was an impediment on the spiritual path. He was the master of self- control and care. However he appeared to have made use of his divine power sparingly and with great caution. Not only his close disciples but also un-acquainted people of different beliefs, from far and near, some of whom had not even met the Swami in person, were convinced of his powers which he might have used un-assumingly for their upliftment. Certain contemporary saints of the country have said that Swami Lakshmana Joo had been strictly guarding his earned treasure of powers and, if at all, he used those scarcely. His awe- inspiring sight and proverbial sympathy drew people of all walks of life near him with their problems to which he was often sharp in giving decisions. It was also observed that he gave a healing touch to those who needed it. Common people believed him to be a redeemer from evils. Some persons of pure heart felt a current of mysterious joy running through their body while receiving his touch on bowing at his lotus feet.

24.2.14 Picture of Personality

Swamiji had disciplined himself into such unwinking vigilance that he was never found saying or doing a thing that was not in consonance with the Truth of his way of life. Only eight months before Swamiji chose to merge in the infinite, his chief disciple Brahmavadini Sharika Devi entered the Divine on Feb. 1, 1991. He did wonderfully well what was quite befitting to his nature and practice. In fact there was very high aiming in the core of Swamiji's very existence which was manifest in a happy combination of three elements:

- (i) Simplicity, an expression of simplicity;
- (ii) Enthusiasm, the vital push of the spirit within;
- (iii) Wisdom, the light of the soul as the portion of the Divine Himself.

Endowed with a magnetic personality, divine charm and wide scholarship behind his spiritual attainments Saivacarya Iswara Swarupa Sri Swami Lakshmana Joo was an inextricable combination of life and religion. By years of study and contemplation, his practice of yoga had ripened to such an extent that his teachings contain the best solution to the problems that face humanity today. His very presence was solace to the depressed, hope to the forlorn, joy to the seeker, inspiration to the scholar and satisfaction to the soul striving for spiritual upliftment. The best in him was all-lovingness that attracted towards him people of all faiths and of different creeds. An embodiment of magnificent qualities, he was a faithful friend, a benefactor brother, a fondling father, a true teacher, a noble neighbour, an instinctive instructor, an affirmed administrator, a congenial companion and above all the girdling guide of all who came near him. His disciples and admirers sought to throng around his radiant personality as honey-bees hover about a fragrant lotus in bloom. Iswara Swarupa's sagacity made him into an exemplary sage. He looked simply divine, when he made a short tour to United States in June-July, 1991.

24.2.15 Homage

The playful ways of the Master - the sage of Ishaber-came to an end on this earth in Delhi in the early hours of the 27th September, 1991 in moments of calmness and tranquility. He had verily been a yogabhrasta (fallen from yoga in previous birth) for he was born in a house of pious as well as wealthy and well-thought parents-sucinam srimatam gehe yogabhratobijayate. The present life of grace and glory was only the means for this Divine being to merge into Supreme Siva, the final beatitude of life. The powers of Truth and Light may not be visible to the naked eye but they are there for the discerning. To pay homage to the beloved 'Gurudeva' let us live for the Divine and let Divine take control of our life to fulfill his purpose.

Source: Koshur Samachar

25.0 PANDIT RADHA KRISHAN KAUL MOHTSIB

A True Ascetic

Professor S.S. Ambardar

The valley of Kashmir is truly called "Resh Vaar" (or Peer-Vaar), the garden of rishis and sufis. In this beautiful vale, shielded from the eyes of the world by snow-capped mountains, have sprung up saints and sufis whose lives have lent a sweet aroma to the culture of the valley from time to time. Their contribution to spiritualism is a source of ever-lasting inspiration for the devout. These saints and sufis denied to themselves even the ordinary comforts of life and devoted their lives in the pursuit of the unknown. Self denial and penance has been the corner stone of their lives.

One such ascetic who passed away recently was Pandit Radha Krishan Kaul Mohtsib, of Motiyar, Rainawari, Srinagar. Few know him but those who came in contact with him could not but feel deeply impressed by his saintly nature, contentment and deep dispassion. He was a true Karma-Yogi. To serve mankind as one's larger self was the hall-mark of his life. Born around 1907, he was the youngest son of his father Pandit Taaba Kaul (short for Aftab Kaul). He had probably studied up to 9th standard. He then set himself up as a dealer in Pashmina yarn. Having been deeply influenced by the Gandhian philosophy, he charged the lowest profit from his poor clients, who included mostly widows and disabled people. His reputation as a fair tradesman was soon discovered by the local branch of the All India Village Industries Association, popularly known as the Gandhi Ashram. He volunteered to supply the Ashram raw Pashmina yarn at cost price. This gesture highly impressed the officers of the Ashram and they offered him service in the organization and posted him at Verinag. Honesty and uprightness were the two important principles of his character; but these did not earn him any credit from his colleagues. He would not turn a blind eye to their dishonest practices which soon brought him into conflict with them. Once he brought to book one of his colleagues when he unearthed a huge stock of Khadi which had been stolen from the Ashram. He was, however no match for his corrupt colleagues, and he had to leave the Gandhi Ashram. He was rendered without a job. He did not mind this and preferred poverty to work in an organization where he would be pressurized to compromise his principles. Failing to get a suitable job, he stayed home for several years and served his three elder brothers. All the brothers not having married had no families, so Pandit Radha Krishan, being the youngest, looked after them. His elder brother Pandit Sona Kaul was a police constable. He was also a man of saintly disposition. The two brothers spent most of their time in meditation and contemplation. His intimate association with Pandit Sona Kaul brought out his latent spiritual tendencies. He was initiated into Gayatri Mantra. He would sit in padmasana for two hours every day and recite the Maha Gayatri Mantra. He spent much time in the company of saints and holy-men. A devotee of Lord Rama, he would often visit the well known woman saint Mathura Deviji at Durganag and recite the Adyatma Ramayan to her and explain its profound meaning.

A few years later, Pandit Radha Krishan got the job of a peon in the office of the Accountant General, Jammu & Kashmir, Srinagar. He was soon recognized as a disciplined man. Most of his officers and colleagues gave him respect, yet there were occasions when he was indirectly taunted for his devotion to Dharma. He was called an orthodox, old fashioned "Bhatta" but that would hardly perturb him. He was full of regard for his officers and was always willing to carry out their orders, yet did not feel shy of telling them what they should expect from him. He was polite but could also be firm and outspoken. Once, it is said, he told one of his officers that he was not meant to buy Kababs from the market for his lunch. If ever he was late to work, he would stay back in the afternoon and complete his allotted job before returning home. In due

course he was promoted to the post of a duplicating machine operator, which job he held for few years. However, finding that the Government service interfered with his spiritual pursuits, he sought voluntary retirement.

In course of time his family commitments also diminished. All his brothers had died and he had only to maintain himself. His pension was enough to meet his simple needs. After his retirement he devoted all his time to contemplation. His daily routine was more or less fixed. He moved to a small room in his neighborhood and lived like a hermit. He was happy to study the Ramayana, the Bhagwad Geeta and Vaks and Shruks from Lal Ded, Paramanand and Nund Rishi which constitute an important part of the spiritual tradition of Kashmir. Jap, penance, charity and surrender to God's will were the four cornerstones of his Sadhana. Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs would visit him and seek spiritual guidance from him. He would rarely enter into a discussion, but when pressed for his opinion, he would recite an appropriate shloka or verse or a proverb garnered from the centuries old lore of his beloved native land of Kashmir. That would aptly answer the question raised.

He was very frugal and wherever he could save he would do so. He would eat only one meal a day. Well-cooked rice, vegetables and a cup of Kashmiri tea were the only delicacies he enjoyed. He would never use soap but cleaned himself with the sacred clay brought from the Shankarcharya Hill or Hari Parbat. A daily wash with cold water was a must, come summer or winter as he led a perfect orderly life. You would see him cleanly and modestly dressed sitting in his room doing his puja or reading scriptures. He never donned the yellow robe. To his last days he kept good health.

He had some knowledge of Ayurveda too. He would collect herbs and prepare Ayurvedic medicines and give these to the needy. Though himself never a man of means, he was a philanthropist to the core and would always help the poor and needy of every community. Whoever poured out his heart trustingly to him would surely find him helpful. Herein lay his greatness as he lived not for himself but for others. He believed that it was worthwhile sacrificing one's comfort and providing relief and succor to a deserving person or institution. Never seeking limelight, he would look for an opportunity where he could help others quietly and discreetly. It is said about him that he had the heart of a king, for his acts of philanthropy are many. Realizing that he did not need his house-hold utensils any more, he gifted them to Durganag Temple where devotees flock in large numbers from all over India during summer. He once came to know of a family living in destitution at Rainawari Shiv Temple and gave them a handsome contribution to perform the marriage of their daughter. Arya Samaj Rainawari approached him and requested him to donate the portion of his ancestral house and adjoining land to it for conducting prayers and spiritual classes. He found the proposal tempting. However, he could not reconcile himself to gifting only his share of the house and land. Therefore, he purchased another share from other co-heirs and donated the two shares to the Arya Samaj Rainawari and a sum of Rs. 500 as 'Dakshina'. Pandit Radha Krishan Arya Swadhyaya Bhawan is a testimony to his inner urge for charity. The Bhawan was a thriving institution until a few years back. The cremation ground at Rainawari, called Kelam-Demb, situated on an island a kilometer away is not easily accessible in winter. The need to buy a boat to ferry the dead was acutely felt by the people. Sensing it was a good cause, Pandit Radha Krishan got a boat made at his own cost. He got it fitted with four oars and two petromax lamps and gifted it to the Hindu community at Rainawari. Such was the good Samaritan. With advancing years he became more charitable. The "Baba Kali Kambli Walle Trust" at Rishikesh had specially impressed him as it provided free meals to pilgrims. Pandit Radha Krishan Kaul donated a sum of Rs.70,000 to this institution. As a wise person he willed a sum of Rs. 10,000/- for his funeral and for feeding the poor. He died after a brief illness in 1988 at the age of eighty one.

Needless to say that all the monies that Pandit Radha Krishan Kaul gave away in charity had been painstakingly laid back by him mostly from his pay and pension and that of his elder brother Pandit Sona Kaul. He had no other source of income and had inherited little from his father. Pandit Radha Krishan Kaul Mohtsib was one of those rare persons who denied himself worldly pleasures but donated gladly all his hard-earned money for deserving causes. An ascetic among householders, he renounced everything for the good of the small social circle wherein he was born. While it would be appropriate to call him a Mahatma, he preferred to be called a Pandit as instead of letting vanity take root, he wanted to curb whatever of the 'ego' was left in him. It would be in the interest of the society if the memory of such men and women of pristine purity is perpetuated.

(The writer is thankful to Shri Triloki Nath Bhat Shastri. in whose house Pandit Radha Krishan Kaul Mohtsib lived during last years of his life at Motiyar, Rainawari, for corroborating the facts given in this brief sketch).

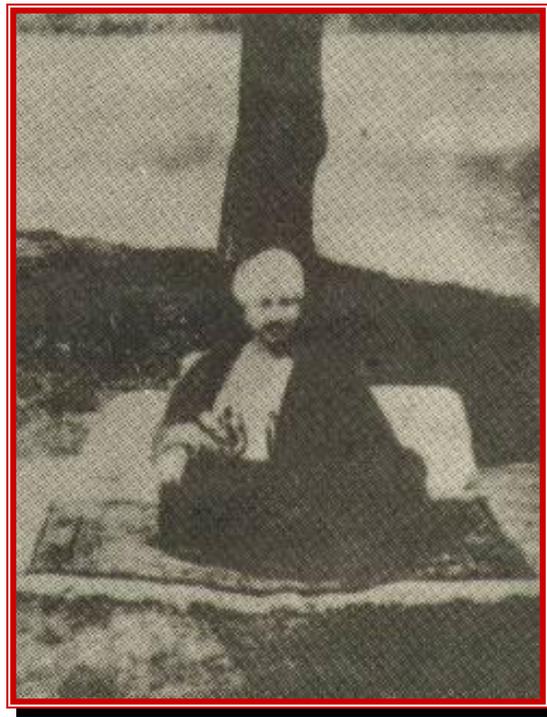
Source: Koshur Samachar

26.0 SWAMI AFTAB JOO WANGNOO

The Adorable Saint

Professor A.N. Dhar

Religion and culture are intertwined in Hinduism; this is evident from the time-honoured institution of sainthood in India that has always got wide acceptance and support from our society. Sainthood orders of many hues and varieties have flourished in this country for ages, since the beginning of the Vedic civilization. Even in the present age of science and technology, sainthood survives in our land and the true saint continues to command respect in society. I have witnessed this fact with particular interest as a native of the valley of Kashmir since my boyhood days. Sadhus and mahatmas hailing from various corners of the country, wearing ochre robes or moving about semi-nude (their bodies smeared with ashes) have traditionally been served, fed and treated with great care and respect by the Kashmiri Hindus. We specially noticed this during the days of the yatra of the devotees, who included sadhus in bulk, to the Amarnath Cave.



Swami Aftab Joo Wangnoo

26.1.1 Kashmiri Saints

However, the Kashmiri Hindu saint himself, as a son of the soil, has maintained his identity in preferring to stay indoors, remain a member of the household though leading a godly/celibate life. Most Kashmiri Hindu saints - though some chose to live in seclusion, in ashrams or cottages - did not look different from householders in respect- of dress or food habits. Of course, the bearing of a saint or some outward mark (such as the length or shape of the tilak) would suggest that he should be a godly person. Since neither monasticism nor living apart in hermitages is stressed upon in the Saiva or Sakta doctrines that prevailed among the Hindus in the valley, it is understandable why our saints would not attach any special significance to

external renunciation, requiring them to distance themselves from the household life. All the same, sadhus and mahatmas from outside the valley, recognized as such through distinct outward marks, were treated with reverence here.

To illustrate what true sainthood means, as I see it, I have chosen to talk about the Kashmiri Hindu saint, Swami Aftab Joo Wanganoo, affectionately called 'Akalaal' by his devotees, who I came to know early in my life when I was 18 years old. Born in 1893, he was a resident of Babapora, Habakadal, Srinagar.

I recall, with feelings of reverence and gratitude, my fruitful association with him that did not, however, last long. This was because he gave up his mortal coil in 1943 (when he was 55 years old), only within a year of my meeting him.

It was way back in 1947, when my friend Trilokil and I studied at the A.S. Degree College, Srinagar, that we met Swami Akalaalji for the first time at the famous Kshir Bhavani shrine, Tulamula, Kashmir. Though carefree as young men, we had almost an identical interest in spirituality then and were inwardly engaged in the quest for Truth. Destiny brought us into contact with this saint at a crucial phase in our lives. It was my mother who actually directed us to the precise spot at the Tulamula shrine where the Swami was seated, amidst a number of his followers, under a chinar tree close to the holy spring of the Bhavani. As we bowed to him, he immediately dropped a 'hint' to us that conveyed that he had been "waiting for us".

26.1.2 Spirituality and Worldly Duties

At the very outset, when Triloki and I met the Swami, he was forthright in telling us that "as the bird employs two wings to fly, you have to practise spirituality and undertake worldly duties simultaneously, i.e., "combine parmarth and vevhar". This was meant to convey to us that the sadhak should maintain a delicate balance between the practice of meditation and involvement in worldly obligations. The Swami pointedly told us that we had to get married; this implied that he did not see marriage as an obstacle to the attainment of spirituality in spite of the fact that he himself had remained a brahmacharin. What I can also infer now from his pronouncement is that probably he could foresee that we had to work out our past karmas as men of the world and, therefore, he advised us to discharge our household duties for our well-being in all respects.

I recall further that as Swami Akalaalji spoke kindly words to us at the Kshir Bhavani shrine, we felt wholly drawn to him as if we had known him long. He stood up from the spot he had sat upon and just strolled about. Grabbing the opportunity, we followed him and unfolded to him whatever we had to say as spirituality seekers. His response was encouraging: "My heart is delighted". Then we three sat together at another spot and were joined by some more devotees. One of them, pointing towards Triloki and me, asked Akalaalji whether we were his friends. In reply, he remarked: "Whom you call my friends are my very eyes". In Kashmiri, the reply sounded lyrical, a rhyming couplet: "tuhend geyi mether, sen geyi nether". What an intimacy grew within a short time between the saint we met and ourselves !

26.1.3 Crucial Observations

Then Swami Akalaal performed a parikrama of the holy spring and we walked in step with him, listening to the instructions he gave us further. I vividly recollect the two crucial observations he made:

i) He was categorical in saying that we had to make the best possible use of our present lives - this should consist of consolidating what we had achieved in our past lives. It is the stability that has to be prized most in the spiritual path, he emphasized. This brings to my mind what Lord

Krishna reveals in the sixth chapter of the Gita--that the aspirant has to build on what he has attained in his past life until he is firmly established in sadhana (a 'long' pursuit, indeed!).

ii) Cautioning us, the Swami said that during the course of his life, an aspirant has to remain mentally alert and vigilant throughout to avoid pitfalls. Inward purity and peace have to be cultivated at all costs. This calls for patience and perseverance - qualities highly necessary for advancement in spirituality. The Swami gave an illustration to drive home the point: just as the flowing stream "swallows up" whatever refuse is thrown into it, so should an aspirant develop in himself the capacity for bearing hardships; he should remain unruffled in the extremes of joy and sorrow, never losing his mental equilibrium. The Swami observed further that facing the severities of life heroically and retaining mental composure even in adverse circumstances are a kind of penance that pays the aspirant rich dividends in spiritual terms.

After receiving the upadesh (teaching) so liberally given by the saint (through the Bhavani's grace), we took leave of him and left the shrine, accompanied by my mother. Then followed our many periodic visits to his residence at Babapora. During the first visit (following our meeting with him at Tulamula), we found to our joy that Akalalji was reciting some mystical verses of his guru, Swami Zanakak Tuphchi, to some of his devotees seated in front of him in his room; the verses were delivered by him in a tuneful voice that made a profound impact on the listeners. I specially noticed the small temple-like wooden structure, erected to the left of Swami Akalal's seat, in which was installed a life-size painting of Zanakakji (seated properly in the pose of a saint) with the picture of Akalalji drawn in miniature towards the bottom, just below the guru's feet. On all the walls of the room were seen hanging, or pasted, the photographs of a large number of well-known Kashmiri Hindu saints of the valley, most of whom had already left this world. It was Swami Akalalji himself who had taken pains to collect all these photographs.

26.1.4 Discourses for Teaching

As our visits to the Swami's house got frequent, we came very close to him. Whenever we found him alone, he would lend his ear to our queries and satisfy us with his pointed answers. Often he quoted lines from the mystical utterances of several celebrated Kashmiri saint-poets, including Lal Ded. He had also a good knowledge of the whole text of the Gita and would recite appropriate slokas during the course of a discourse to clarify points and reinforce his teaching. He was well aware of the writings of Swami Vivekananda on Yoga and Vedanta and was also conversant with Patanjali's Yoga Sutras. Usually in the evenings, whenever there was no likelihood of any visitor intruding, he would talk to us in close confidence and reveal his experiences to us. Very often we heard him chanting these lines in a state of ecstasy: "Sivoham Sivoham Siva Kevelohan/Sat Chitananda Rupah, Sivoham, Sivoham. "

I quite remember how in response to my question once, he talked to us about Maya, characterizing it as the mysterious power of the Lord of the Universe. Dwelling on the distinction between Sukshama Maya and Jada Maya (which I could not quite comprehend then), he made two important observations: (i) It is very difficult, but not impossible, to be free from the entanglement of Maya. The solution of the problem, he said, lies in the aspirant's ability to stand mentally aloof and not get involved in the maze of this phenomenal world of sensory experience. For this, an aspirant has to cultivate dispassion and the power of detachment. The Self, he said, is to be realized as the Lone witness of all that goes around us. (ii) The other way of piercing the veil of Maya, and thus getting at the Truth, is, he maintained, through our inward purification whereby one's intellect gets finer and finer until, through divine grace, it seizes the elusive Reality.

26.1.5 Unmistakable Visions

During the course of his conversation once, Swami Akalaji, who, as I ponder now, had unmistakable marks of the Master Yogi, explained to us the significance of yogic visions. According to him, having visions of various divinities and hearing 'voices' during meditation do have a significance for the aspirant, but they are not to be looked upon as the ultimate end. As one achieves purity of mind and progresses in meditation, visions do occur and may be seen as landmarks on the path, indicating that the spiritual goal is within the reach though, in terms of the steps or stages, its attainment may be still distant - the spiritual path having been aptly compared to "the razor's edge". The human form divine, encountered during the course of sadhana as the aspirant advances, may be taken as the lotus that emerges from the mansarovar of the yogi (when his mind is serene and still). All such experiences are valuable, indeed, but the aspirant's main goal has to be the realization of God, which is no different from Self-realization. All divine forms, the Swami said, are only a reflection of our Swarupa (Real Form): that is essentially Formless, comprehending Being and Becoming, paradoxically perceived as the still/ever-throbbing Light of Pure Consciousness.

In this context, I must mention, for elaboration, what Akalaji one day told me when I was his lone listener in his room. He said that the divine forms that the sadhak sees in meditation as distinct from himself fade wholly in the state of samadhi: all duality dissolves here and the self abides in perfect tranquility; there is no one to converse with and all conversation drops. What remains is pure Consciousness-Bliss. This is the stage when the little self stands wholly conquered and the aspirant attains Sivahood. About 48 years have passed since I heard this illuminating account of Self-realization from the Master, beloved Akalaji. The nectarine words I heard then still linger in my memory as a constant source of inspiration.

26.1.6 Swami Zanakak Tuphchi

The present account of Swami Akalaji would be incomplete without something said about the spiritual eminence of his Guru, Swami Zanakak Tuphchi. Zanakakji lived a hundred years, many years of which he spent at the Wangnoos' at Babapora until he attained Nirvana. Here he was looked after with great care by Akalaji and others in the family (his unmarried elder brother, Sirikakji Wangnoo, and two married brothers, Gopi Nath Ji and Balji Wangnoo, besides two married sisters). It is said of Zanakakji that he was an accomplished yogi and had spiritual sidhis at command. There are two anecdotes that were narrated to Triloki and me, by Swami Akalaji which confirm the fact.

Once Zanakakji directed him (Akalaji) to spend a couple of weeks in solitude inside the Parimahal building on the hill adjacent to the shrine of Goddess Zishta in Srinagar. Akalaji obeyed and stayed away from home, absorbed in meditation. He witnessed a miracle happening every day: all that he needed for his puja and also what he needed to feed himself would materialize at the spot he had chosen for his sadhana. The Swami also talked of his special love for Brari-Angan, Uma Nagri, where his younger brother, Gopi Nath Ji, an employee of the State Forest Department, had been posted for three years. Here he practised meditation undisturbed. Once he stayed here for a continuous period of six months and experienced deep samadhi that was stable. Talking of the experience, he said: "The period of six months seemed to me just a brief interval of six seconds". This was, of course, a miracle of a different order, a sign of his consummation as a sadhak, his attainment of the "summit" of divine consciousness. Surely, he was a befitting disciple of his accomplished guru.

The other incident is a fearful story of Swami Akalaji's encounter with an Aguri, who stayed in the Bairow Mandir, Narsingarh, Srinagar. The Aguri had befriended Akalaji for some time and one day he almost succeeded in his evil design. This was to offer him as a human sacrifice

through his occult power, but the design failed because Zanakakji's grace came to the disciple's rescue. As the Aguri started his kriya, Akalalji, who was seated opposite him, started feeling spell-bound (his limbs chained as it were). Some luminous thread-like object materialized before him that gradually took the form of a snake. There were seven earthen plates containing flaming wicks immersed in ghee between the Aguri and Akalalji. When the snake that was formed in the air had moved on to the fifth plate and was very close to Akalalji, he turned his thoughts to his guru Zanakakji, seeking his spiritual help. Immediately, he felt the guru whispering these words into his ear: "Spit into the dhooni (sacred fire)". He did accordingly and was instantly released from the spell. He rushed back home, where he was admonished by Zanakakji and advised to beware of persons such as the Aguri. On the following day, Akalalji, out of curiosity, again visited the Bairov Mandir and found to his surprise that the kriya had recoiled on the Aguri; in the process he had lost his own life.

26.1.7 Devotion to Guru

Among the many things that impressed me most about Swami Akalalji was his extreme devotion to the guru. On several occasions, when he mentioned Zanakakji's qualities, he went into bhava-samadhi. In memory of the guru, he performed a yagya twice annually; on these occasions he worked with devotion and fervour, paying personal attention to all the participants: a crowd of sadhus specially invited besides his own devotees and relatives, who all were served with prasad.

Swami Akalalji's father, Shri Keshav Joo Wangnoo, served as a revenue clerk at Leh during the reign of Maharaja Ranbir Singh. He was assassinated while in service. In view of this tragedy, his widow, Kudamal, and children had to face great hardships. Swami Akalalji had to abandon his studies at the eighth standard; he took up the job of a messenger in the State Telegraph Department, Srinagar, to earn for the big family as his elder brother had also done earlier (taken up a job in the State Revenue Department).

Akalalji's mother was a noble and deeply religious woman. He himself was the most religious of all her six children. As a boy, he spent most of his time in the company of saints and frequented religious places.

He came into contact with Swami Zanakak Tuphchi through his brother-in-law, Shri Janki Nath Misri, a disciple of Zanakakji. Soon Akalalji got attracted to the Swami, who gladly accepted him as his disciple.

I have gathered some additional biographical information, reproduced below (a few facts having been mentioned already), concerning Swami Akalalji from his nephew, Shri Makhanel Wangnoo; it touches further upon his family background and also tells us something more about his guru Zanakakji.

26.1.8 Devoted Disciple

Swami Zanakakji was originally a resident of Krimshur, Badgam, whence he moved to Srinagar and stayed first at the Tuphchi's at Dalhasanyar. Thence he shifted to the house of Shri Janki Nath Misri. Akalalji served his guru devotedly, paying regular visits to the Misris for the purpose. Usually, he brought him dinner from his home cooked by his mother, after he got free from his official duty. Once, on a snowy night at 9 p.m., he went with a bowl of food to Shri Misri's house to be served as dinner to Zanakakji. The main gate of the house was bolted from inside; despite Akalalji's repeated knocking at the gate, no inmate came forward to open it. The devoted disciple remained waiting outside and fell asleep (with the bowl of food in his hands). Next morning, at about 4 a.m., Zanakakji got up and opened the gate. Seeing the devout Akalalji

asleep (carrying the bowl), he woke him up, took him inside and ate the food that had by now got frozen.

From Shri Janki Nath Misri's house, Swami Zanakakji shifted permanently to his disciple Akalalji's residence at Babapora. The disciple soon realized that he could not devote himself wholly to the service of his guru and, at the same time, continue serving the State Telegraph Department. He chose to give up his job and thus had all the time at his disposal to serve his Master. In turn, Zanakakji lavished all care on his promising pupil, who did not take long in learning the skills of a yogi and advancing on the spiritual path.

Akalalji's sadhana included daily visits in the afternoon to Hariparbat. Here he practised meditation for hours at the foothill just below the Kali temple. While performing Parikrama of Hariparbat, not even once did he go up to the shrine of Goddess Sharika (Chakreshwari temple) and preferred to bow to the Devi from the foothill itself.

Under the directions of his guru, Akalalji read the Guru Gita (in Sharda script) every morning. He also recited the slokas of Bhavani Namasahastrastuti and Indrakshi Stotram in the evenings. He was very fond of devotional songs and music; Kirtans and Bhajan Mandalis were often held at his house.

People in difficulty, who came to seek his blessings, were received by him with love. He gave them basma (sacred ashes) from his guru's Kangri (the firepot a Kashmiri uses in winter), which he had preserved as a relic. To some he gave yantras, consisting of sacred words written in saffron-ink on bojpatra. He also used the knife of his guru for healing the sick; he applied its touch to the ailing part of a patient's body. Those who sought his help had, obviously, all faith in him. They included the local Muslims too.

26.1.9 Unostentatious Saint

Swami Akalalji was an unostentatious saint, who never dissociated himself from household duties. There was nothing about his dress that would mark him off as a sadhu; he smoked and was a non-vegetarian. He took pleasure in coaching his school-going nephews, Shri Makhanlal and his younger brother. Makhanlalji remembers still how once he requested his uncle to tell him what he should do to cultivate the habit of getting up early in the morning, without being roused up by anyone. The Swami prescribed a method: "Direct the pillow you rest your head on to wake you up at the desired time". Then a youngster, Makhanlal practised the instruction with success, which he describes today as a "sort of inculcation for determined action".

Swami Akalalji visited the holy cave of Amarnath many times. Every year he gifted clothes, money etc. to many sadhus and mahatmas that joined the yatra to the cave.

Swami Zanakakji was learned and versatile. His devotional/mystical poems in Kashmiri, written in his own hand, were carefully preserved by the Wangnoos until they left the troubled valley six years back. (It is hoped that no harm has been done to any of the relics kept in the room Zanakakji had occupied for years.) He was good at astrology and could read horoscopes very well. When he looked at the horoscope of his young disciple, Akalalji, he noticed that Venus occupied the twelfth house (Sagittarius), which he considered unfavourable. Using saffron ink he made a cross-mark on the planet and instead placed it in a different house (to ensure that the planet had a benefic influence on the native). As if to fall in line with what Zanakakji had done, Akalalji too did something similar (but not identical) to help the daughter of one of his devotees, in whose horoscope Mars was in a house unfavourable to her matrimonial life, predicting widowhood. Through a religious ritual, she was 'married' to a sapling to ward off the evil influence of the planet. It was seen that in some time the sapling withered completely, showing that the tantra had worked well. Later, the girl got married and her husband lived long.

26.1.10 Company in Distress

Makhanlalji confirms the view that Swami Aftab Joo was the senior gurubhai (spiritual brother) of Bhagawan Gopi Nath Ji. He not only visited the house of Akalalji when his guru Zanakakji was alive but also when yagyas were performed in memory of him by the senior disciple.

As reported by a devotee of Swami Akalalji, namely the late Shri Shivji Mattoo, resident of Nawakadal, who once accompanied the Swami to the Kshir Bhavani shrine, he witnessed a miracle. When the Swami, along with his devotees, was returning from the shrine by a Doonga (houseboat), he unveiled his back to the inmates at Shadipur; they found visible marks of lashes on this part of his body. That was the time when the Bread Movement launched by the Kashmiri Hindus was on. The Swami then revealed that the agitating young boys were being caned mercilessly at Srinagar, and, therefore, he desired that they should reach Srinagar speedily. This incident confirms that Akalalji was in spiritual tune with the youngsters in pain and distress.

26.1.11 References

1. Shri Triloki Nath Dhar, author of several books, including Life and Teachings of Rupa Bhawani.
2. He furnished this information to me in response to my queries incorporated in a questionnaire. I thankfully acknowledge his help.

(Prof. Dhar retired as Head of the Department of English, Kashmir University, recently. With several books on literature and religion to his credit, he was also Professor Emeritus. He contributes to K.S. also.)

Source: Koshur Samachar

27.0 SWAMI MAHESHWAR NATH JI

Upender Bhat

Fourteen kilometres from Srinagar city on the foot hills of Harishwar Hill is a village called Khonmoh. The original name derived from the word Khenmoksh, meaning Moksha in a second for the abode was also there. Harishwar, originally Harshi-Har means the Lord of Giver of Happiness and eternal peace/Moksha.

This village has produced men of high calibre both in spiritual and material world. It is said that the famous historian and writer of Rajtarangini, Kalhana also belonged to this village.

On the roadside of this village is a pond known as Somnag and on the bank of this Somnag is an Ashram called Shanti Mahesh Ashram. As the name suggests, the Ashram was built by Swami Maheshwar Nath and the word Shanti was added by. Swamiji, saying our aim is 'search for peace'.

The village had a mixed population of the Hindus and Muslims. Among the Pandits lived a pious family of Dhars. Swami Maheshwar Nath better known as Bhagwanji among his disciples and devotees, was born to Vishwa Nath Dhar of this family.

Bhagwanji's family was poor and so his father could not give him proper education. About his educational career, Swamiji would sometimes say "I was a student of Third Standard (at Khrew) when the school inspector visited the school for inspection. Having been extremely happy with my intelligence and replies, he ordered the Head Master to promote me to Fifth Standard. This is all I have studied." Due to financial strains, Swamiji had to give up his studies and at the tender age of 10, he was kept as a servant in the family of Shri Narain Joo Parimoo at Purshyar.

The behaviour of the housewife, where Swamiji was working as a servant, ultimately changed the course of his life and he took refuge at the feet of Holy Mother Sharika at Chakreshwar.

He visited Mother Sharika daily for many years. He would do tapasya at the feet of Mahakali and Saptrishis. Sometimes, while in a cheerful mood, Swamiji would say: "While I would be busy in meditation, when it would rain, no drop of water would touch me and when it was hot, a patch of cloud would cover me up."

Like all other saints, Swamiji also had to face a lot of problems in his spiritual life. He had to undergo lots of tests before Mother Sharika directed him to his Guru. The story of the meeting of the Guru and the disciple is a strange one. I narrate it here:

Bhagwanji was instructed to go to the bank of the Jhelum (near Bana Mohalla) and asked to follow a Brahmin who would be wearing a particular dress and would come there early in the morning for performing the daily Sandhya.

On the particular day, Swamiji reached there well in time, waiting anxiously and impatiently to have a glimpse of his Guru, the true friend of both the worlds. One can imagine the condition Swamiji must have had at that time - a moment of life for which he had waited for years and prayed to Mother Goddess with tears in his eyes.

The person arrived on the scene but the suspense was there; his face was covered with a towel. He did his Sandhya, took his Kamandal and started back, Swamiji followed him.

The suspense continued as his guide went to a meat shop, purchased meat and entered a particular lane. The lane was familiar to Swamiji as in this lane lived one of his cousin (father's sister's son). The anxiety increased all the more as he knew almost everyone there, but had never heard about any godly man living in the area. The person entered the house of the cousin

of Swamiji. Swamiji would later said: "At that point I lost my wits". He followed him to his room and, to his utmost surprise, found the person now his guide to be none other than his cousin. On seeing Swamiji, he said (referring to the Mother Goddess) "she had none left other than me," Here started the formal relation of Guru and Shishya.

His Guru remained a secret saint till the end with only Swamiji and a few of his disciples knowing about it. He was so hidden that even his wife did not know anything. She once said to Swamiji about her husband that his body remains cold like ice during nights. Swamiji advised her not to disturb him. However, unknowingly she had disturbed him one night and the result was that he had some bleeding next day.

Swamiji was a devotee of Lord Krishna. He would believe in Satsang. A Sarang would be always with him and referring to that Sarang, he would say: "This is my true companion". The famous Kashmiri bhajans of Kashmiri saints like Swami Parmanand, Krishan Joo Razdan and Vishan Joo were the attraction of his Satsang. He would say that in Kaliyug, the best way of God realization is via Satsang and Bhakti.

Swamiji was a firm believer of Prarabdah - the destiny. Though Swamiji, as we have heard, has done many miracles in his life, but he would never claim them. He would stress on praying to Mother Goddess. Nothing is outside the ambit of Prarabdah, what God (Narayan) has written on your forehead cannot be undone. The only way to overcome is to surrender unto the holy feet of the Almighty. He would quote the famous Kashmiri saint Laleshwari and say:

"O man, why are you trying to make rope of sand. You cannot pull your boat through this. What Lord has written in your destiny none can change that."

Swamiji would advise his disciples that they should not crave for material things, not even Siddhis and Uoksha - our aim should be to go beyond both.

To people visiting him for material benefits, he would quote the local quotations which mean:

"For the desire of Heaven and due to the worry of Hell, people come to your Lord, who will come to you selflessly - who has that much of patience."

Swamiji would be glad to see a true and sincere seeker. He would listen to him patiently and advise accordingly.

"It is not good for a saint to make himself public" and would quote Laleshwari:

"Lalla, I wander having locked my heart. Anybody, who makes a show of himself, has ditched himself into the well, give him to be fed to a devil."

Swamiji was revered by all the contemporary saints of his time. In his youth, he used to visit Swami Vidyadhar who would both love and regard him. Swami Gashkak of Gautam Nag held Bhagwanji in high esteem. People who have seen both the saints say that they were just like each other.

Swamiji had written many poems but one day he burnt them all, only a few remained which give us an insight into the high spiritual state of Swamiji.

Once a Muslim saint, alongwith his disciple, visited Khonmoh. The two met and the dialogue began. The Muslim saint then said to Swamiji; "Let us sing a Leela in the praise of Mother Goddess (Khir Bhawani). I will state the first line and you follow with others". Bhagwanji gladly agreed and we got a unique and beautiful Leela in praise of Mother Goddess which is very much loved and liked by devotees even now.

Bhagwanji went into Maha Samadhi in January 1990 immediately after migration from Srinagar, after a brief illness. At that time, Swamiji's age was around 79 years which means that he must have been born somewhere around 1911.

Source: **Koshur Samachar**

28.0 SAINT-POET MIRZA KAK AND VAKH PARAMPARA

Rajinder Premi

Kashmir through its recorded history has been the land of saints, scholars and mystics. After Lal Ded, Sahzanand and Roopa Bhawani, the Valley was again blessed with the birth of one more saint-poet Mirza Kak, who continued the Vakh parampara in Kashmir. Vakhs are the quintessence of spiritual and religious sayings and utterances of mystics and saints.

Kashmir has been a sacred land where tirthas, sacred springs and places of worship are found in abundance. One such tirtha is dedicated to goddess Hingla Devi in Brang Pargana. According to Brangesh Samhita, the Brang Pargana has been named after Brangesh Muni, the author of this Samhita. The Brangi river, which runs through this pargana, also bears his name. The village has thus got the name of Hingalagund which later got abridged to Hangalgund. In this village near Kokernag lived a pious Brahmin named Lassa Pandit. He had two sons - Bhulla Pandit and Mirza Pandit.

28.1.1 Aversion Towards Worldly

Bhulla Pandit got married and lived a householder's life, while Mirza Pandit remained a bachelor throughout his life. From the early childhood, Mirza Pandit remained engrossed in Bhakti and prayers. He developed aversion towards worldly pleasure and led a very simple life. For this, he was nicknamed as a simpleton. Mirza Pandit, when a grown-up boy, was adopted by his mother's sister who lived in village Acchan in Pulwama Tehsil. He used to help her in domestic chores and also worked with his adopted father in his fields. Some time after Mirza Pandit's father died, his mother also passed away. Mirza Pandit returned to Hangalgund and continued to live there with his elder brother, Bhulla Pandit.

One incident relating to Mirza Kak's life merits mention here. One day after his father's death, when he got busy in the fields, his mother forgot to send him his mid-day meals. With scorching heat from above and hard labour in the fields, Mirza Kak felt pangs of hunger. He waited for some time under the shade of a tree, where he fell asleep. The Divine Mother of the Universe, realising the pangs of hunger of Her true Bhakta, appeared before Mirza Kak with a large plate of sweet Kheer and offered it to him with Her own benevolent hands. Mirza Kak mistook her as his own mother and partook of the Divine Kheer. The Mother disappeared and Mirza Kak set to work again. Some time later, his mother arrived there greatly lamenting her forgetfulness. Mirza Kak took no notice of this and remained busy with his work. This indifference of her son was misunderstood by his mother as a silent protest for having been kept hungry. She begged for pardon for her mistake and requested that he should partake of the meal which she had brought, after much delay though, Mirza Kak was greatly surprised and told her that he had already eaten to his fill the Kheer served to him earlier. His mother was surprised to know this. She affirmed that she had not brought anything for him to eat earlier. Realising this, Mirza Kak understood that it was the Divine Mother, Who had fed him with Kheer earlier.

28.1.2 Miracles Recounted

There are many such stories recounted about the miracles he did or experienced. Lalleshwari (Lal Ded) is reported to have appeared before him in the guise of a virgin and showered her blessings on him. Since then he began reciting Vakhs. It was the Pathan (Durrani) rule in Kashmir then and forced and unpaid labour was exacted from the Kashmiri Pandits. A Pathan soldier forced Mirza Kak to carry a load of rice from the village to Srinagar and to bring a receipt for its delivery. On his way to Srinagar near Achabal, the Divine Mother appeared before him and took off the load and sent him back to the village with a proper receipt of delivery. When it

was handed over to the Pathan, he thought it was a fraud being played on him. He got the receipt verified and from that moment became a disciple of Mirza Kak. A yearly pension was sanctioned by the Pathan rulers to Mirza Kak, which lapsed in 1949 when the government led by the National Conference withdrew the grants. A kardar from Srinagar, a great spiritual saint, gave Guru Dakshina to Mirza Kak under instructions of Shri Sharika Bagwati.

Mahatma Parmanand of Oma Nagri along with his disciples came to Hangalgund to meet Mirza Kak. Many used to come to seek his help and blessings. The stones of his miracles are a legion.

Mirza Kak was born on the first day of the dark fortnight of Posh 1805-Bikrami. He attained Nirvana on the second day of dark fortnight of Jesht 1891. Hundreds of his Vakhs are available in print.

[Shri Premi is a freelance writer and resides at 13/497, Lodi Colony, New Delhi-110003].

Source: **Koshur Samachar**

29.0 SWAMI ASHOKANANDA



Swami Ashokananda

29.1 Swami Ashokananda as I Knew

P. Dattaram

The great Saint Sant Kabir has said:

<verse>

It means that an ordinary animal serves the mankind throughout its life and even after its death its body is useful. Several things can be prepared out of its hide and bones for the benefit of the man. But this is not the case of mankind. After the death of a man nothing is being utilised out of his mortal remains. So long a man is alive, if he does the work for the benefit of mankind and be useful for all, his name will remain even after his death.

Our Swami Ashokananda comes under the category of the immortals by his service and his name has been well known in Kashmir.

He was born in a poor Mukherjee Brahmin family in a small village in Jessore district now in Bangla Desh. When he was of three years age, his father died and he was left alone with his elder brother aged 12 and widowed mother. Being poor, they had to live a hard life on the earnings of the lady and her first son.

Our Dinabandhu, to be known afterwards as Swami Ashokananda, was a very calm and quiet natured boy but his elder brother was of rash temper. Even for a small fault he used to beat poor Dinabandhu and his mother was very much worried about the behaviour of her elder son.

Dinabandhu was enrolled in a school as per tradition at his fifth year. He had to walk bare-footed in adverse conditions to his school far away from his home. His teacher was also of harsh temper and if the boy was late on any day he too used to beat him. Neither in the school

nor at his own home he was getting any affection and he started to remain absent from the school frequently and preferred to sit under a mango tree in deep contemplation.

One day he was severely beaten up by his brother for his frequent absence from school and he was warned that if he persisted in doing so, he would be driven out of his house. His mother also admonished him without realising the boy's plight. The poor boy could not tolerate such kind of treatment for long, both in the house and in the school and one day he took to his heels and absconded.

It was said that for years he did not appear. Some said that he went to Himalayas, some that he was doing Sadhana in some unknown place. After a prolonged period of absence, he came in contact with His Holiness Shri Sachitananda Maharaj known as Dadaji. Dadaji was a staunch disciple of Holy Mother Sharada Devi. He was a renowned Sanyasi of those days. Under Dadaji's kind guidance, his spiritual pursuit developed.

It was not known as to how he was called Ashokananda, though some attributed that he was called so because of his constant meditation for hours under an Ahoka tree.

One day in the early hours of dawn, he had a dream in which a young tall Sanyasi of divine face standing before him and keeping his right hand on his head as an 'Ashirwad' and advising him not to waste his time there but to go to Kashmir valley instead, and try to continue the incomplete work which he could not finish himself during his lifetime.

When Ashokananda woke up, he could not still get over the dream and mentioned this to Dadaji and on his advice left on his quest to Kashmir.

Sometime in 1935-36, he reached Sumbal and stayed there for a year or two. He was not satisfied and moved this time to a hilly place near Achhabal village which later came to be called Nagdandi. This place was surrounded by thick pine trees and had many natural springs gushing with clear water. In Kashmir valley, Nag means spring and there were many such springs: Kokar Nag, Beri Nag, Anant Nag, Nag Dandi etc. In this area, Ashokananda selected a gigantic pine tree and sat under it for his Sadhana.

He sat bare-bodied regardless of snow and rain and none knew that such a person was residing there for a long time. The jungle was thick and none would dare to enter it as it was under the control of the Maharaja of Kashmir for his hunting sprees. The place was inhabited by a number of tigers, panthers, wolves and several varieties of stags.

Swamiji was absolutely fearless and the dangerous animals also were not afraid of him and hence there seemed to be a close rapport between them. Many times, the wood cutters appeared to have noticed Swamiji in deep meditation and many animals lying about him without fear. The news soon spread and people started flocking to see this unusual sight and have the darshan of Swamiji. It was said that many times Swamiji used to order the animals to go away from near him to permit the visitors to come close to him and they used to obey him like tamed animals.

Once Maharaja Hari Singh of Kashmir, accompanied by his guards happened to pass through the jungle when he espied a young Sanyasi sitting under a pine tree in deep meditation. He was surprised to see the wonderful sight of a radiant young Sanyasi still as if in trance. He and his guards dismounted and watched him for more than half an hour but still there was no movement of any limbs of Swamiji. Suddenly a horse neighed and disturbed the silence. Swamiji opened his eyes and saw before him some royal person and his attendants, standing with fear and awe writ on their faces for having disturbed him accidentally.

The Maharaja was quick to offer his apologies but Swamiji smiled this away and soon both of them fell into a long close conversation. Maharaja Hari Singh was deeply impressed by Swamiji

and after receiving his Ashirwad left the place with his retinue promising to call on him again. Then began his frequent visits to Swamiji and Yuvaraj Karan Singh was also one of those who accompanied his father when he visited Swamiji.

Their visits in turn encouraged visits by others and as no proper shelter was available for all, a small hut with a kitchen was constructed in the beginning. Gradually some disciples donated lands and some more lands were also purchased and more rooms were constructed.

His discourse at Satsang was becoming popular and many people from other parts of Jammu and Kashmir, Delhi, Bombay, Kanpur and even from abroad started to visit the Ashram. He was a very good singer and used to play on Sitar or Been. Soon a small temple for Thakur Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa and a guest-house were also added. By 1948, the Ashram acquired about 7 acres of land and an apple orchard was started to make the Ashram self-sufficient for its maintenance. The Ashram has now about 800 fruit bearing trees of 17 varieties. The revenue earned by the auction of annual crop harvests meets the major share of the expenses of the Ashram.

The period between 1935 and 1970 was a golden era for the Ashram. It became a pilgrim centre attracting people from far and near, without distinction between rich and poor, caste and creed, literate and illiterate. Thousands used to take part in Sri Ramakrishna and Ma Sharada jayantis celebrated here.

Swami Ashokananda was a perfect Sadhak but he never performed any miracles. His sound advice and kind look were the only remedy he offered to those who visited him. He was so simple that even in the severe winter he wore only a simple dhoti and a chaddar which impressed the visitors very much. Occasionally he used to visit Bombay, Delhi or Calcutta at the pressing invitations of his admirers and disciples.

During the later part of 1970, Swamiji was not keeping well. He was anxious about the continuance of the work after him. Being an ardent disciple of Sri Ramakrishna, he was keen that the Ashram should be taken over by Sri Ramakrishna Mutt. He also came to know of the reluctance on the part of Sri Ramakrishna Mutt to take up any new commitments due to their own preoccupations with other centres. He sent an invitation to Sri Ek Nath Ji on the advice of a mutual acquaintance.

Sri Ek Nath Ji visited Kashmir and called on the Swamiji who was sick and a bed in Dr. Giyalal Ogra's house at Srinagar.

Swamiji told him of his interest in handing over the Ashram to Sri Ramakrishna Mutt or to the Kendra for its proper running after him.

Sri Ek Nath Ji too was reluctant to accept the proposal and he informed Swamiji that he will talk and persuade Ramakrishna Mission authorities to accept his offer.

However in the meantime Swamiji passed away and in his will he expressed his desire to handover the properties of the Ashram to Ramakrishna Mission or Vivekananda Kendra.

Soon it became clear that Sri Ramakrishna Mutt was not taking up the Ashram and thus it came into the possession of the Vivekananda Kendra.

Swami Ashokananda attained the Maha Samadhi in December 1971. As per his wishes, his mortal remains were cremated at the premises of the Ashram which he used to call his Tapo-bhumi and Karma-bhumi. Thousands of his devotees thronged to the funeral, covering long distance from Jammu and other areas to Nagadandi.

His eternal Soul continues to shed its blessings on the Ashram which was dear to him.

Source: **Kashmir: The Crown of India**

29.2 Nagadandi

Some Reminiscences

S. Kaul Safapuri



Swami Ashokananda

About two kilometres away from the historical and picturesque town of Achhabal, on the right side of the road to Uma Devi (Barari-Aangan), there is the Ramakrishna Mahasammelan Ashram, which was founded by late Swami Ashokananda, more than forty years ago.

It is a fairly big Ashram now, a compact complex of some buildings and a small temple, dedicated to Ramakrishna Paramahansa, at the foot of the wooded Achhabal hills. The Samadhi of Swami Ashokananda is within the precincts of the Ashram.

I am one of those persons who have seen this Ashram, which was the abode of Swamiji for nearly thirty years, grow from a tiny two-kanal hermitage, with a solitary hut within, into a sprawling five-acre Ashram, inclusive of a well maintained small apple orchard.

I vividly recall the warm summer day back in 1940, or perhaps 1941, when two tonga loads of people travelled from Anantnag to Achhabal. I was one of the party, a young school boy. I was staying with an uncle at Anantnag. One day my parents came there and the entire household was thrilled when my father, late Shri Shambunath Kaul, who was a devout disciple of Swamiji, disclosed that Swamiji was somewhere at Achhabal.

Swamiji, it may be recalled had been staying for many years in a small room at the shrine of Nandi Bhairav at Sumbal (Sonawari) but had moved out from there and his whereabouts were not known to many people. Naturally when the disclosure came, it thrilled all; because all of us. our family and relatives, were deeply attached to Swamiji.

At Achhabal we got into a three-storey building across the road, opposite to the Mughal garden and climbed up to the third storey. This storey had a narrow but long wooden balcony on the side facing the road and there we found Swami ji sitting on a bed and talking to some people.

The house was the residence of one Shri Amarnath, a police official posted at Achhabal and a devotee of Swamiji. It was a great reunion which gave tremendous joy to everyone.

A little later we again got into the tongas and took the road to what turned out to be a pretty small retreat on the fringes of a wooded slope Nagadandi.

I recollect there was a tall poplar tree by the side of the road where the tongas halted, I caught sight of a Sanyasi, with a thick beard and matted hair, perhaps collecting cow dung. Later I learnt that he was Shri Damoder Ji, who was helping in setting up the small Ashram. Perhaps he is now at Wanpuh near Anantnag.

We climbed up the little distance to the Ashram. All that we found was a newly built small hut on the banks of a small pond fed by a tiny natural fresh-water spring just inside the forest. An ideal site for a secluded Ashram and we were told that Swamiji himself had chosen the site. The hut consisted of two small rooms. The interior one which was smaller and hardly enough for one person to stretch himself, was to be Swamiji's sanctum for many years. There was also a tiny shed next to the hut which was to serve as the kitchen. This shed was improved later to provide more space.

Swamiji had not moved in yet as the Ashram was being given finishing touches. Those doing so were to be the first resident disciples at the Ashram. They were Shri Shambunath, later to be known as Shakti Chaitanya and Shri Trilokinath who now lives in Srinagar.

While at the Ashram, Swamiji himself took us round and showed us a dry spring a little distance inside the forest. On a subsequent visit I found water gushing out of this spring.

After spending sometime at the Ashram we again took to the road in the two tongas along with Swamiji and proceeded to Uma Devi. Some kind of a festival was going on at the shrine and we all had our mid-day, meals there. I do not recollect clearly whether on our return Swamiji got down at Nagadandi or came back to Achhabal.

For me it was the beginning of a long association with Nagadandi I was deeply attached to Swamiji and the place fascinated me and therefore I paid frequent visits during my school and college days. I would spend weeks in the Ashram helping in vegetable cultivation, watering and such other chores. I was an ignorant young man and did not have an inkling of Swamiji's towering spiritual height. I would simply treat him as a friend.

One early winter day I went to the Ashram and spent the night there. Next morning when we woke up we found there had been a heavy snowfall during the night. I was stranded as no transport was available. I got bored and told Swamiji that we would roll some snow and make a snowman. He could feel my boredom and readily agreed. We got so engrossed in the job that we had to seek the help of Shaktiji and Trilokiji also and a whole day was spent in the pastime.

On another occasion when I spent many days at the Ashram, I would bicycle down to Achhabal every day to collect the mail. One day I asked Swamiji whether he knew cycling. He replied in the negative and I promptly offered to teach him. It gave me the joy of a proud teacher when he agreed. There was a small open space surrounded by forests, on a higher elevation opposite the Ashram. I toiled up the slope with the bicycle with Swamiji close on my heels. There I tried to teach him the art of riding the machine. The seat of the bicycle was very hard and he asked me to get a sheet of cloth to cover it. I raced down to the Ashram and returned with a sheet a few minutes later. And imagine my shock when I found Swamiji riding the bicycle with the ease of an expert over the undulating ground.

A few years later, Brig. Omkar Singh became the next-door neighbour of Nagadandi when he bought a plot of land to lay an orchard. He built a house there and would live there during the

summer months. He would visit the Ashram almost daily in the evening. This would be followed by long walks in which I would always participate.

The next resident disciple at the Ashram was Shri Jia Lall who came to be known as Maharaj Ji. He is possibly in Jammu now. After 1947, he was joined by Shri Makhanlal Chaku and Shri Kanaiyah Lall Kaul, who got the names of Sambit and Shanti respectively.

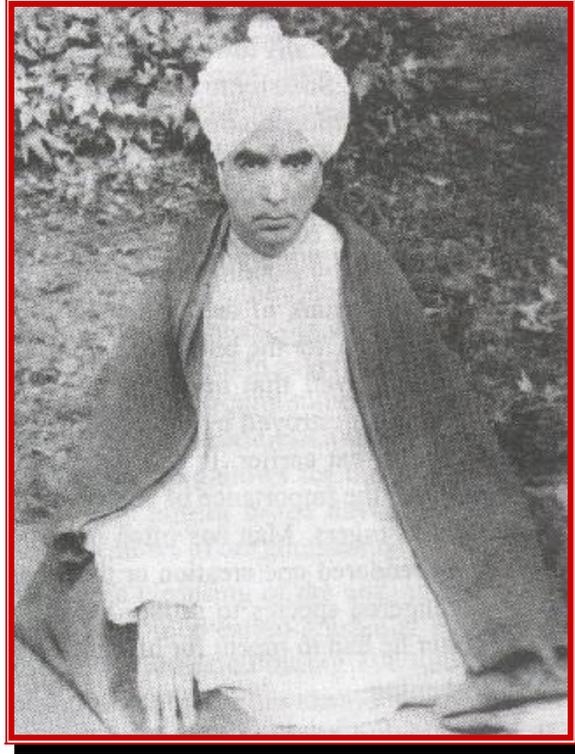
I often visited Nagadandi as long as Swamiji was there. My association with the Ashram will always be one of the most cherished memories with me. When I think of Nagadandi, my mind is flooded with recollections which might find expression some day.

Source: **Kashmir: The Crown of India**

30.0 SWAMI GOBIND KAUL

What his Poems Convey

V. N. Drabu



Swami Govind Kaul

It is reasonable to believe that a site has some form of consciousness in the same way as the human body has an animating consciousness. It is the outer form of our self that comes into contact with the phenomenal world through the senses which implant thoughts and feelings in our consciousness. The site and the self thus interact with each other imperceptibly in a significant way. To one such site of our blessed valley of Kashmir belonged Gobind Kaul. The place is popularly known as Vanpoh in Anantnag, which in earlier times must have been a beautiful meadow in the close vicinity of a forest fragrant with wild flowers and therefore originally called Vana-Posha. The son of Swami Aftab Kaul and Vishvamalya, born in Dattataraya Gotra, Gobind Kaul naturally followed the tradition of his forefathers and became an ardent Shaivite. To his elder brother Harishwara and to his Guru Bharatlal he owed his proficiency in the Sastras and yoga. His association with other saints, particularly Swami Krishanjoo Razdan (his maternal uncle, who was a celebrated poet of his time), and their impact on him are evident from his '*rosary of hymns*' (**bhajanmala**), published under the title Gobind Amrit. Tankodi Chandra (Sant of Varanasi), Sant Lal of Shahpur and Swami Rama (looked upon by his devotees as the Sakshat Shiva) of Kashmir, besides other Pranyogis and Jnanayogis of his time, showered many benedictions on him. (Poem No. 8, Shiva Lagyo, pp.10-11).

His devotional lyrics reveal that he was deeply influenced by the thought-current of Mansurul-Halaj as well and he freely used the popular idiom of his own Kashmiri dialect, being a blend of Sanskrit, Persian and Arabic. His songs are rich in imagery, and the vocabulary he employees

to convey his inner experiences suggests, unmistakably, how he too must have followed the same spiritual path that Lalleshwari had treaded several centuries before him.

We notice that the devotional strain is marked in Gobind Kaul's lyrics, from which we infer that it was as a devotee that he began his spiritual journey to the Divine and in course of time, through sustained devotion and sadhana, attained Self-realization. He is so much devoted to Gopala Bala Krishna that he loses the consciousness of his limited self in his bout of 'lolamasa' (love-drink). He offers himself wholly to his rasalila (sport of love) involving measured movements of the body. Beside himself with joy, he would like to accompany Balakrishna in his ramblings on the bank of the river Yamuna and give his all to kissing his feet (moni-padan). He hears the sound of Om from his flute and wishes to play rasa in all forms with him. All the time the sound of Om reverberates and he perspires profusely at the sight of his lover's hair (poem No. 27 'Shyam-Sunderah.... p. 31) that Manmohan gets complete hold of his mind, and he feels charmed ! Rukmani could not see Cidanand (consciousness - bliss) as something different from Caitanya Krishna and, likewise, Gobind sees the Lord's playing-sites as the very states of wakefulness Yagrat), dreaminess (svapna), and deep sleep (Susapti). In the ocean of divine knowledge (jnana) and bliss (ananda) that Gobind delves deep into, he attains the summit of contemplation (samadhi) (Poem No. 25, 'Satcit-ananda atma Krishnan', pp. 28-29) .Hereth Swami completely identifies himself with his beloved Krishna, offering his all for love - his body, mind, intellect and what not !

The same devotional strain is discernible in the Swami's approach to the divine Mother. The true bhakta finds no flowers or ablutions suitable enough to propitiate the Mother, even though he wholeheartedly selects the best ones for her. She represents the primeval energy that pervades all objects; her immanence is felt all around. Bhakti for the divine Mother leads one to salvation (she is muktidayaka). Gobind Kaul, the saint-poet, invokes the all-powerful energy (Sakti) to remove his impediments and lead him to self-recognition. All the jivas (individual beings) and devas (gods) turn to the divine Mother for granting them the boon of final emancipation. She is sat-cit-ananda and dayasyand (sea of Mercy); she is both our father and mother. Addressing her, Gobind says. "You are the atman and the light of Intelligence, of whom the bhakta asks for calm of mind and pure intelligence to overcome the darkness of ignorance." Where the Mother sits in her visible and embodied forms, that place turns into siddha-pitha (seat of success). Those who serve her feet are surely blessed and cured of all worldly ailments and sufferings. (Poem No. 4, 'Om Jaya Bhavinai ...,'pp. 5-6) Gobind Jee enshrines her lotus feet in his heart and taking them as Omkar-bindu, he surrenders himself to the Mother (as Vaikhuri, the Goddess of speech). At her feet, he listens to the sat-sabda (true word). Gobind is suffused with Lola (love) for his Mother, with tears running down his eyes. He invokes her grace for gaining admittance into her abode - all the hurdles from top to bottom being removed - so that he is united with the Transcendent. She is Gayatri, Savitri, Sarasvati, Rajna, Omkara as also Amba, Uma, Durga, Tripura, Sarika, Hari. She is pure, without duality, and Sat-cit-Ananda (Poem No. 2, 'Saran Amate..... pp. 2-3). She is the dynamic aspect of the Absolute and the real object of worship. Obviously, the worship of Sakti forms an essential element of the Saiva aspirant's sadhana. That explains why Gobind meditates and contemplates upon the Sakti (dynamic) aspect of the Absolute.

When we talk of Gobind's devotion to the holy Mother, we, in fact, refer to the ever dynamic inunant aspect of the Divine. Siva is the Absolute/ Brahman Parmesvara, in His transcendent aspect. Adorned with the crescent moon and bearing matted locks of hair, Mrtyunjaya Gangadhara, carrying the trident and damaru in his hands, Gobind believes that He would keep him ever awake with the sound of the damaru and his sat will be stabilized. While chanting the monosyllable Om of love, he will turn the water-mill to steady his japa to produce the sweet suham tune. Gobind prays: "May the sun of Dvadasanta Mandala shine forth within and outside

myself." He praises Siva as the light of pure Consciousness whose grace the devotee seeks, and also earnestly seeks the Yogesvara's help in having a spiritual bath in the Mansarovara (the tranquil lake of the mind) like the fabled swans 'that can sift milk from water': representing the highest state of consciousness that Parmahansas (like Sri Rama Krishna) are believed to attain as embodied human beings. Gobind invokes the skull bearer, white Spotless Sankara to burn his very marrow as his oven of love is fully ablaze. To Him, stationed in the temple of his heart, he would offer the flowers of love in worship. He naturally regards love as the very fountain-head of spirituality, the very source and culmination of life. He pins his hopes on Sankara, imagining that in his horoscope the planets are ideally positioned in favourable signs - Jupiter in the ninth house, the moon in the kendra, exalted Saturn in Libra. He urges him not to be indifferent to him considering the fact that he had shown mercy and kindness towards Markandeya.

As the devotee's sadhana deepens, the Sadguru draws closer to him. The more he concentrates on his lotus feet, the more resonant does the sound of nada-bind get. He sees the sahasrar (thousand-petal lotus) in full bloom and the divine light all around himself. The sound of Om reverberates as he fondles the Chhanda, the way being shown by the Guru. With his gaze fixed on the ether (akasa), the devotee sees the Lord and the rising sun and the moon in the midst of the shining galaxy of stars. Gobind addresses the spiritual seeker, exhorting him not to get enmeshed in the shackles of Maya but listen to the word of the Guru. For surely once he repeats the five divine names and concentrates his gaze on the Ajna Chakra, the central point between the eyebrows (called brumadya), he will reach the abode of Sadguru (alakh, agam, anamaya). In no uncertain terms the aspirant is instructed to look to Omkara binda. This is what Lord Siva has revealed to his consort, Gauri, in the privacy of perfect solitude. Gobind instructs the sadhak to deepen his attention (what he calls surat) and concentrate it on the sabad till all sounds merge into one and thus Surat Sabda yoga is realized. (Poem No 40 'Guru-dhyana', pp 44-45).

The leitmotiv of Gobind Kaul's bhajans is to identify oneself with Omkara. Like a true Saiva he follows the Guru tradition and in the footsteps of the Guru finds every pore of his being filled with the sound of Omkar and every hair vibrant with it. Gobind encounters an extra-ordinary spiritual experience (Poems 40-44, pp. 44-49). He sees the Light Divine, hears the drum being played upon, the ringing of the bell and sound of the conch, enjoys the charms of the dawn, finds the Beloved seated there, the fairies singing in chorus, the flash of lightening, etc. The eclipse of his sun is gone with the spread of bright sunshine and the moon emerges from behind the clouds. The path of Omkara is verily the path of union with the Absolute. Om is the root but the path is beset with so many pitfalls which the Guru helps the sadhaka to overcome, sifting milk from water and helping him to see the pure luminous self. The Anahat Sabda (unstruck sound) awakens the Jivatma and the night is turned, as it were, into mid-day. Many a secret is revealed to Gobind through the grace of his Guru who opened his 'wooden bolts' from within, what is described as Chakra-bedan in yogic literature. (Poem No. 84, 'sapud jivatma ...,' p. 93).

Every morning Gobind reflects on su and su (Poem No. 72, 'Prath prabhatan,' p. 81) on Om and its resonance, on Sat as su and su. It is ever pure, taintless and free. It is sat-cit-ananda and self-luminous. It is All Absolute (Paripuran). Gobind considers himself lucky to have got the human frame, a thing even the devas pine to obtain as a boon. He has thus been enabled to practise meditation on sat as su su ! The Vedas, Upanishads and Puranas have sought to illuminate the distinction between the questions 'who he is' and "who I am". Gobind says he has reflected on 'su su' in the company of truth seekers, and tasted the divine nectar. He exhorts the sadhaka to enter through the door of the heart (Poem No. 115, 'hradayik darvaza,' pp. 121-122) and listen to zeer (fall) and bam (rise) of the inward music (the sound produced by the yogic practice of pranava. He should be ever wakeful to listen to the anahat sound of Om sabda that

signals the dawn of superconsciousness; it serves as it were on the aircraft that carries the sadhak into the higher space (gaganas). Let the sadhak become the royal eagle to traverse the outer space, the dwelling of the famakan (the disembodied being). That is Gobind's instruction to the sadhak.

Gobind lays utmost emphasis on steady and constant spiritual practice that alone ensures success in the path: the spiritual aspirant attains his goal. Every moment of consciousness for the practising seeker ensures the blooming of his heart lotus accompanied by illumination - rise of the spiritual sun of consciousness. (Poem No. 114. 'Alimai Khotai', pp. 120-121). He has to give up his ham (ego) and caress su su, Gobind communicates his spiritual experience to the truth-seeker, enjoining upon him to ascend to the sky of dvadasanta, drink the divine nectar to become nishkal (desireless) and cross the barriers courageously, and not get frightened by the deafening noise enroute. The Guru, he assures the sadhak, will take full care of him. His grace alone would ensure for him the enjoyment of uninterrupted flow of the sound of om: listening to the satsabda day and night accompanied by the experience of inward illumination. Gobind maintains that su su is the source of divine love (lola) that chases away death. As the wise alone can understand and appreciate the art of a florist, so can the yogi understand what su su conveys.

Gobind's state of mind is not difficult to judge. Like other mystic poets, he sings of pain and separation, of joy and fulfillment in the same breath. The Beloved just tempted me, says the mystic, and then abruptly disappeared. This has made him restless and sick. How he longs for the Beloved to return and the bulbul (a song bird) to see the flowers in bloom ! He does not aspire for anything other than the Beloved and has offered to buy his wares as the sole purchaser. He has sacrificed his body and mind to him. He considers the cycle of coming and going (what the word sansar conveys) fierce as a blazing fire and something that nothing can excel in cheating. He is helpless and tears roll down his eyes. He now decides to withdraw himself to the inward melody of omkara which sounds like a guitar.

[The author, Dr. V. N. Drabu, is a well - known scholar in the field of history and an accomplished writer. He lives in Jammu.]

Source: **Koshur Samachar**

31.0 SHRI SARADA DEVI

The Holy Mother - A Symbol of An Ideal Motherhood

Mrs. Jai Kishori Pandit



Shri Sarada Devi

The Holy Mother, Shri Sarada Devi, symbolizes the ideal motherhood of women, ancient and modern. Her life is an enigma. On the surface, it appears to be just the homely life of a Bengali Brahmin lady, mostly in a rural setting. Yet her deportment discloses unmistakable marks of dignity and love of an order that may easily be called superhuman. In the galaxy of the greatest women of the world the Holy Mother shines apart in conspicuous luminosity. Perhaps such a life appeared at this critical moment in the history of India to illumine the way out of the present welter of cultural conflicts.

Born in a tiny village of Bengal, lapped in Nature's beauty, but devoid of modern amenities, the little girl, Sarada, had something out of the ordinary in her mental make-up. The momentous event of Sarada's early life was her marriage to Shri Ramakrishna at the age of 5. A shocking piece of news to the modern world and particularly to its western section. The sequel of Sarada Devi's marriage is replete with scenes and incidents remote from ordinary life. The pathos of anxious expectation and worrying misgivings relieved by happy and dramatic turns of events, the hazards of dangerous hurdles in the way eased by peaceful solutions and safe endings - all these made her advance firmly and steadily towards peace and blessedness.

Shri Ramakrishna's life was a boon to humanity, Sarada Devi seems to have come as a ministering angel. She focussed all her mental and physical resources for preserving the

precious life of Shri Ramakrishna, there-by setting a brilliant example of one-pointed service of a wife to her husband. Unfathomable love was at the back of her scrupulous service.

Cast in the mould of absolute selflessness like Shri Ramakrishna she stood out in unique splendour as an endearing mother, enfolding all who came to her with her limitless affection which was not reserved for any particular group. Broad as the sky and deep as the ocean her heart was open to all. Finding that her niece, Nalini, blinded by the prejudice of untouchability, could not serve food to a Muslim dacoit Amjad by name, with due regard, the Holy Mother volunteered to do it herself and she went so far as to clean the place after the meal was over. In her eyes Amjad was as much her child as Swami Shardananad, a worthy monastic disciple of the Master and her own devoted attendant. Equality in her eyes of these two persons shows unmistakably the superhuman stand which she took during the days of intense orthodoxy.

According to the scriptures motherhood sanctifies a woman. It is the consummation of her life, when a woman becomes a mother; her feelings and emotions get more purified than in wifehood. She becomes free from all taints of body-consciousness. That is why motherhood is sacred. It requires every woman to unfold herself as a mother and not as just a woman. Shri Sarada Devi was an universal mother who served her disciples with the same care as a mother serves the children she gives birth to.

She would strive her most to provide her children with the best food available in the place that would suit the requirements of different individuals. Like a true Indian mother, she would not take her meals before her children were fed. The tenderest feelings of her heart were, however, vividly exhibited when any of her children would take leave of her. Indeed, a person who had the good fortune of tasting her motherly love at Jayrambati or any other place could enrich his assets for his lifelong spiritual journey. This exquisite sweetness embodied in the Holy Mother was wonderfully matched by her dignified bearing as well as her sagacious dealing with people and their affairs. Though a wife, she was really a nun with the purest heart fixed for ever on God; without actually being a mother, she was in every sense the loving mother of numberless children. For all practical purposes she appeared to be an ideal householder. Her concern for her brother's family, particularly for some of its members, would at times look like earthly attachment even to the eyes of a sincere spiritual aspirant. This wonderful synthesis of contradictory elements in her life presents a unique manifestation of perfection on the human plane.

No barrier of caste, creed or colour could stand before the unimpeded flow of her limitless love. Freed entirely from the shackles of society, the Holy Mother had liberty, equality and fraternity as the very breath of her life. In her life, and in her teachings she has left a balm for suffering humanity. She was very courteous and liberal in her attitude towards others. This was demonstrated again and again through her actions. As a widow in the last century coming from a small village in Bengal, the Holy Mother accepted two foreign ladies as her own, so much so that sister Nivedita felt so close to her that she would behave like a little child and always sit nearest her feet.

The Holy Mother was an embodiment of patience, disinterestedness and selfless service calmness and love. Her life is a typical example of how women can serve the family and the society. Her patience with the members of her family and certain devotees was something not attainable by ordinary human beings. Her courtesy and kindness and consideration to all, whether good or bad, have no comparison. Her forgiving nature was something divine which itself is an external manifestation of her high spiritual attainment.

Her disinterested love and compassion were not confined to her relations and disciples only. There was a woman suffering from foul - smelling cancer of the ear, whom even her relations had discarded but the Holy Mother saw to it that this woman was taken to the nursing - ashram.

Sympathy and love for others in distress were the chief characteristics of her nature. Gentle and patient as she was she could never tolerate cruelty and injustice. When she heard the cries of a woman who was beaten by her drunken husband, she ran to the police and raising her voice, asked the man to desist. The man immediately obeyed the Holy Mother. The women of our day should draw inspiration from her and emulate her life.

We have to cull out these virtues from Holy Mother's unique life and see how they can be useful to us; we have to practise them in our own lives. According to Swami Vivekananda putting such noble ideas into practice is practical vedanta.

The Holy Mother was endowed with all the feminine virtues which have been traditional good qualities of an Indian woman and mother. She has shown by her life that India is travelling towards a greater possibility which will create a better culture and civilisation, showing the way for fulfillment of woman's destiny as an ideal mother.

[Professor Jai Kishori Pandit enjoys reputation as an able teacher and scholar of English]

Source: **Koshur Samachar**

32.0 SWAMI GOVINDANANDA

An Unostentatious Sanyasin

S.L. Shali



Swami Govindananda

The Valley of Kashmir has not merely been a source of great attraction for the tourists from all corners of the world but its beauty-spots and natural landscapes have, through ages, drawn holy persons, including mahatmas and sanyasins, from various parts of India and other countries. Realising its value as a rishibhumi (the land of spiritual seers), such holy persons find their periodic stay here conducive to their spiritual advancement. Since my boyhood, I have had the good fortune of having known a number of Mahatmas from outside the valley, some of whom hailed from the south of India, who impressed me with their knowledge of the sastras and their spiritual attainments. Of them, the one Sanyasin, Swami Govindananda, on whom this article is focussed, impressed me most and influenced me deeply. I am stating hereinafter all that I can recall now about him - relevant to his life and teachings.

In the mid-thirties (of the present century) a saint, namely Kanayia Lal, took shelter in a hut owned by the late Pandit Balakak Dhar, a well-known Kashmiri Pandit of his time, who was a highly placed Government functionary and a righteous person. The hut stood on the right bank of the river Jhelum, from which one could have a full view of the river and of the Safakadal bridge in Srinagar (that was at a little distance from the hut).

After the hut was vacated by Kanayia Lal, a Sanyasin from the south, Swami Govindananda, came to live in it along with a fellow sanyasin, Swami Rughnath, who served the former in view of his spiritual stature and superior intellectual calibre.

32.1.1 The sacred word

Swami Govindananda neither revealed his age nor his birth place to anybody. He took only one meal a day. He highly valued the Bhagavad Gita and the Upanishads (especially the Mandukh Upanishad). When in ecstasy tears often rolled down his eyes. He was invariably heard chanting the sacred word 'OM'; the word came spontaneously from the inmost recesses of his

heart. While uttering 'OM' - sacred name/symbol of the Divine - he would often inhale deeply. He advised the seekers to meditate on 'OM' - Nirguna, Brahman, nameless and formless object, which would ultimately lead them to the realisation of the Absolute. To his close and sincere devotees, he recommended meditation consisting in chanting 'OM' with long breath and open eyes, gazing on the Trikuti - the space between the eyebrows. This spot is the Agnachakra, which is the seat of the Mind. Through the repetition of this practice, involving steadfast concentration on this point, the aspirant can see with his open eyes the supreme light and experience eternal bliss. The Swami maintained that it helps the sadhaka to recognize his true self and experience a state of ecstasy, which makes him totally in-drawn so that he does not feel like coming out.

32.1.2 Occult Powers

Swami Govindananda had occult powers which he only rarely used. Once, one of his devotees, who was depressed as he had been told by an astrologer that he would fail in his B.A. examination (session 1942) of the erstwhile Punjab University, approached Swamiji and entreated him to tell him if the astrologer's prediction would come true. Pausing for a moment, the Swami assured him that he would come out successful. However, as to the division he would be placed in, he didn't reveal anything. The prophecy of the Swami came true when the result of the candidates was received at the Martand office, Shitalnath, Srinagar.

Another vivid evidence of Swamiji's clairvoyance that I, as also two other devotees, got was when one day he expressed his desire to see an elevated seer, known as Chandanwari-ka-Baba, who was a perfect Siddha. The Baba came to be known by us through a Forest Range Officer who, as his duty required it, had gone to Chandanwari to see that all the visitors and locals had left the spot (next halting stage from Pahalgam to the holy cave of Amarnath Swami) in the beginning of the month of November during the period when the late Balakak Dhar was the Deputy Commissioner of Anantnag. The Baba did not leave the place despite the great persuasion of the Range Officer. He told the officer not to bother about him as there was no one to mourn his death. He, however, requested him to provide him with enough stock of wood for his dhooni. The Range Officer gave him, besides wood, some sugar and tea-leaves (used by the Kashmiris) tied in a piece of cloth; he did this out of his reverence and compassion for the saint. After the severe winter was over, the same Forest Ranger visited Chandanwari again. To his surprise, he saw smoke coming from the place where the Baba had proposed to light his dhooni. He cut a passage through the ice and reached the source of the smoke. It was the dhooni of the Baba, whom he found in deep meditation. Sensing the arrival of a human being, the Baba at once recognized the Ranger. The officer was surprised to find the pouch of sugar and tea-leaves that he had given the saint six months ago intact and untouched. It is evident that the Baba had attained the Prakamyam power which enabled him to create hunger where there was none or eliminate it when there were pangs of hunger. The Range Officer reported the matter to the authorities at Pahalgam and also to those at the headquarters of the Anantnag district. Prompted by curiosity, several persons, especially the Deputy Commissioner, Anantnag, rushed to Chandanwari to have the Baba's darshan. This is how he came to be known as Chandanwari-ka-Baba.

32.1.3 Holy meet at Chundanwari

Illuminated souls or siddhas have an inner rapport with one another. Once in the month of Ashada, Swami Govindananda went to Shri AmarNath Ji. As was revealed to us later on, he was very keen to see the Chandanwari Baba on his way back from the cave. As they met, during the course of their conversation, the Baba put a small pitcher on the dhooni to prepare tea and thereafter some invisible being arrived, who performed the job of the host. Swami

Govindanandaji was struck with surprise and when he left the hermit's place, he could see some footprints on the snow which were not there before. According to Swamiji, the host Baba had control on divine shaktis that came to his aid when needed.

On hearing of the spiritual powers of the Chandanwari Baba, the devotees at Safakadal Ashram also expressed to Swamiji their eagerness to have a darshan of this great siddha. A smile appeared on his face, and he asked them to have patience and wait. After a year or so, a devotee offered him three mangoes at the Safakadal Ashram. One of these he gave to the devotees present, another to his attendant sadhu and the third he advised the latter (the attendant) to keep intact, saying that he had an inclination to have the Baba's darshan that day. This was just a casual conversation in the morning, and all the devotees left one by one. The yogi with his yogic power knows what is happening in the universe and where. Here too such a miracle happened. The Baba 'descended' at the hut of the Swami the same evening. A large number of devotees who had heard of the Baba came to have his darshan, bringing with them fruits, sweets, milk and other eatables, of which they left a pile at the Ashram. A sincere and selfless devotee had brought milk in his glass, which was what the Baba took mixing it with curds late in the evening. Early next morning at about 5 o'clock, many devotees, including me, came to the Ashram to have the Baba's darshan and blessings once again. But, to our dismay, he had left in the wee hours when no transport was available. Swami Govindanandaji informed us that the Baba was gifted with Laghima power which could make him light enough to move through air. He had left all the gifts on the ground, and on enquiry from Swamiji it was learnt that the Baba did not like a crowded place. He liked solitude and avoided distractions. One wonders how many of the present-day Swamis, with all the modern paraphernalia around them, can concentrate wholly on the Lord!

32.1.4 At Brindaban

Anticipating future trouble in the valley, Swami Govindananda left his Srinagar Ashram for good in mid-fifties. He went to Brindaban, where he set up his own Ashram, Govindamatha. He would periodically come to the valley to bless his devotees.

In the early seventies, I was at Delhi. Archaeological excavations were in full swing at Mathura then. My friend and close professional associate in the field, Shri Puran Singh Jamwal (the present owner of the Sant Market, Purani Mandi, Jammu) also participated in the excavations. I too decided to join the team deputed to see the excavations at Mathura and thus got an opportunity to also see the Swami's Ashram, Govindamatha, at Brindaban. Beyond the name of the Ashram, I did not know its exact whereabouts and without a guide, it would have been a tiresome task for me to locate it, especially because Brindaban is dotted with Ashrams and Maths all over. After seeing the excavations, I stayed for the night in the excavation camp at Mathura and the next morning, I requested the officer in charge of the excavations, Shri M.C. Joshi (later on promoted as Director General, Archaeological Survey of India and at present Secretary, Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, New Delhi) to provide me a jeep for the travel, which he readily did. Besides Mr. Puran Singh, four to five more colleagues came along with me to visit the holy places of Brindaban.

After seeing some of the prominent temples and sacred places in Brindaban, the driver asked me to show him the way to the Swami's Ashram: precisely the spot where the vehicle provided had actually to be driven to. I had fears in my mind whether I could lead the party to that place. However, the driver, on my initiative, could take us to Davanal Kund. Now all the members called upon me to indicate the path to the driver. As we got down from the jeep, there was a surprise for me and my companions when we saw Govindanandaji himself coming to guide us to the Ashram. I paid my obeisance to the Swami, who escorted us to our destination, the Govindamath, through dusty, zigzag footpaths. Reaching there, we were served with tea and

snacks. It appeared as if Swamiji was already in the know of our visit. We stayed at the Govindamath for an hour or so and felt delighted when we listened to the Swami's spiritual discourse, in which he displayed both his knowledge of the scriptures and also his insights based on his own sadhana. From among my colleagues, Shri Puran Singh became a changed man thereafter. He became an ardent disciple of Swamiji. In later years, he often visited Govindamath accompanied by topmost officers, where they invariably found the Swami deeply absorbed in meditation.

Once out of mere curiosity, a devotee at Safakadal Ashram peeped into Swamiji's room and saw his seat (asana) having risen above the floor level. Again, at the residence of a devotee, Shri T.N. Raina, the Swami, as usual, got up at 4 a.m. for meditation. After a brief spell, the devotee witnessed divine light emanating from the Swami's Brikuti (space between the eyebrows). As a matter of fact, any person, belonging to whatever religion or caste, came under the spell of the spiritual vibrations that Govindanandaji always exuded. The hut in Srinagar where the Swami lived, which was owned by the late Sh. Balakak Dhar, was later sold to a prominent Kashmiri Muslim. This new owner (who is no more now), even after the departure of the Swami to Brindaban, showed great respect to the hut (that had been his hermitage).

In the spring of 1987, Swami Govindananda paid a surprise visit to the valley and went to see all his devotees, leaving out none, without giving anybody the feeling that it was his last visit to the Valley.

32.1.5 The Mahasamadhi

How the Swami gave up his gross body was all the more an interesting event. Prior to the day of his attaining Mahasamadhi he had observed a fast for three days. Early in the morning of 25 September, 1987, he rose up unusually before the usual hour. He had his 'arthi' in the temple of Lord Krishna built just in front of the room in which he performed his daily meditation.

He asked his attendant sadhus to prepare tea. They were very pleased as they thought that the Swami would break his fast. He himself went into his room, had his meditation in his usual way and entered into the state of samadhi (which proved to be his Mahasamadhi). Thus in his usual yogic posture he mingled with the infinite and attained the abode from which no soul comes back to this transitory world. All his life he practised what he preached, when he reached the end of Sadhana, he translated into practice the teaching given by Lord Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita: "He who, with a mind steady and endued with devotion and strength born of devotional practice, fixes his entire life-force between the eyebrows at the time of death, and contemplates on him who is all-knowing, primeval, subtler than even an atom, sustainer and director of all, glorious like the sun, and beyond all darkness of inertia and ignorance - he verily attains to that Supreme Being" Srimad-Bhagavad Gita, Chapter VIII, slokas 9-10 by Tapasyananda).

Swamiji lived an unpretentious and unostentatious life. The end was calm and serene. There was no commotion in him as is usually associated with the common people when they pass away. It was a peaceful and tranquil state in which he gave up his mortal coil. It can be inferred that great seers like Swami Govindananda generally have a peaceful end, quite in consonance with their life of penance and renunciation. However, Swamiji left behind him (as great Mahatmas do) his spiritual samskars - a current of divine energy - for his followers to draw inspiration and strength from.

In conclusion I may add that many of us were deeply influenced by his spiritual attainments and simple way of life. My friend, Prof. A.N. Dhar, has also been a consistent admirer of Swamiji. How he knew him and he observes about him is being reproduced hereunder on his request.

"Swami Govindananda lived for many years in Kashmir and commanded great respect in the Valley. He was a rare saint, a yogi par excellent, who was visibly discernible as such to the thoughtful among his devotees. He was a fountainhead of inspiration to many truth-seekers, who included Kashmiri Pandits in bulk. My own father was one of his close devotees, and I too was as such naturally drawn to him as a boy in my early teens-impressed and influenced by his spiritual discourses significantly. I vividly recall that he was a tejaswi saint, serene and sedate, and had a piercing intellect besides being deeply read in our scriptures. Never for a moment did I find him interested in anything other than paramarth and he prized the Bhagvad gita as the most useful of our scriptures. He always exuded joy and peace, and the inquisitive listeners including the young found his discourses very educative and absorbing. In the year 1987, before he attained his mahasamadhi at Brindaban, he paid his last visit to the Valley. When we came to know of his arrival in Srinagar, my parents (who were alive then) expressed their desire to have his darshana. That prompted me to see him at Durganag, Srinagar where he was temporarily lodged at the residence of a devotee (Shri Brij Nath Kotru). The Swami readily agreed to accompany me to the Kashmir University campus where I stayed then. He was pleased to see my parents and the other members of our household besides some of my colleagues who had come to have his darshana too. He liked the natural surroundings and had a good word for the congenial atmosphere of the place. He blessed us all and was escorted back to Durganag by Shri Kotru's elder sister. It was a memorable day for our family."

At the moment Swamiji's admirers are scattered all over the country and even abroad, and it is hoped that with the improvement in the trouble-torn valley, they would have occasions to meet and discuss themselves their individual experiences and thus in course of time more and more light will be shed on the spiritual attainments of this remarkable saint.

Source: **Koshur Samachar**

33.0 SWAMI HIMMAT KAK

K.L. Swaroop

Swami Himmat Kak was born in the year 1845 and attained Mahasamadhi in the year 1912. He hailed from Goshi-a village in Kupwara District well known for being the abode of a number of pious men and women. From the very childhood Swami ji was found to be intoxicated by the fervent love of God. Owing to his extraordinary disposition of mind and spirit he, soon after completing his schooling, chose to be away from the hustle and bustle of the mundane worldly life. He embarked on a journey to Sharada Siddha Peetha situated in Tehsil Atha-Muqam, District Muzaffarabad (now in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir) on the confluence of Kishen Ganga and Madhumati rivers, about 30 miles from the village Goshi. There in the shrine of Sharada Devi he practiced severe austerities (Tapasya) and attained illumination. At the age of about 40 years, Swami ji was ordained by the presiding Deity of Sharada Peetha in a dream to proceed to Srinagar, shocked to find that his sister's husband Pt. Suraj Ram Swaroop had been killed by some miscreants of a criminal gang after looting his property. This gruesome incident had stunned his sister and his two nephews, Pt. Shiv ji and Pt. Sona joo. All of them were in an awful and pitiable condition. Swamiji's presence in this hour of distress, was a great solace for them and provided them with the much needed succour. As for himself he got busy with the spiritual activities in a small hut, which he got constructed adjacent to his sister's house at Sathu, Sheetal Nath. This hut became a centre of spiritual activities and remained so till 31st of March, 1912 when Swami ji left this mortal frame. A number of devotees, seekers and others thronged this hut and one of the frequent visitors was Maharaja Pratap Singh, the then ruler of the state of Jammu & Kashmir.

Source: **Koshur Samachar**

34.0 SWAMI GRATA BAB

B. N. Saraf

The land of Kashmir is hallowed by great souls - saints, seers, rishis, munis, mystics, sufis, faqirs, gods and tirthas. Little wonder, therefore, that this holy land of Bharat Varsha has throughout maintained the 'parampara' (tradition) of producing men and women of spiritual eminence. Kashmir alone in India has a recorded historical account of its past in the Rajtarangini of Kalhana and subsequent writers, spanning several thousand years.

Kashyap Rishi of yore, shines at the top of the galaxy of great souls. He was so exalted as to have an easy access to the gods to invoke their help to ward off evil. According to the legend narrated in the Nilmata Purana, Jalodbhava (water born) came to live under the care of Nila in the waters of the Satisara. He had obtained from Lord Vishnu the boon of being 'indestructible under water.' As he grew up, he became arrogant and cruel, indulging in death and destruction all around. Nila got so much perturbed over his demonic behaviour that he had to approach his father Kashyap Rishi for help. The rishi in turn approached Brahma, Vishnu and Maheshwara for redemption from the evil element. Finding the ineffectiveness of Lord Vishnu's Sudarshan Chakra against Jalodbhava, who had disappeared under water, the gods decided upon cutting the mountains around to get rid of the demon. As the water gushed out, Jalodbhava got exposed and was beheaded.

Kashmir has been rightly referred to as 'Rishi Vaer.' All rishis and mystics have not been men or women of scholarship and erudition. They were, however, human beings given to renunciation, contemplation and compassion to attain spiritual heights. They were either married persons or recluses. Swami Grata Bab was one such recluse, whose actual name was Pandit Prasad Joo Koul. His parents were residents of Shopian town in South Kashmir. He was, however, adopted by Pt. Zana Koul of Banamohalla, Kashmir. The Swami was taught Sanskrit by Shri Suraj Ram Bhagwan and Persian by Shri Ram Wander Bhagwan at Srinagar. As he grew up, he went back to Shopian and lived with his natural parents for about three years. Thereafter, he shifted to Srinagar and sold off his inherited house at Banamohalla to the well-known saint, Swami Kailash Koul.

As I have learnt from my grandfather, late Pt. Madhav Joo Saraf, Grata Bab as a very young person (when he was still known by his name Prasad Joo) had lived in our house for quite some time before he went to Achabal. Though he looked normal and also behaved as such, he enjoyed sound siesta-cum-sleep during the day, of course attending to normal work whenever required. In contrast, he remained virtually awake during nights, absorbed in meditation. Though he tried to give every one an impression that he was asleep, to the discerning eye, his inclination towards spirituality was evident.

Around the first Great war, he fled from our house to take refuge in the premises of a 'Grata' (water mill) at Achabal, where he stayed for about three decades. It was here that he attracted the attention of people through his antics as a typical mastana. Apparently, he talked incoherently in soliloquies, and attracted crowds of believers from all communities. Very many such visitors came to believe in his spiritual powers as their questions got answered and their desires fulfilled. It was in view of the Swami's long stay in the premises of Grata (water mill) that he came to be called Grata Bab.

Miracles started being attributed to him, with the result he became an object of curiosity and attraction. If I remember the name correctly, one of his devotees from Srinagar, Nandlal, revealed to me that he was detained by the Swami and persuaded to stay put at Achabal. Shri Nandlal was very anxious to leave early to be able to catch a tonga for Anantnag to proceed for

an onward journey to Srinagar by bus. He could not summon up the courage to leave without Bab's permission and so stayed on there, internally restive. After some time, Bab, under an impulse, blurted out that transport was arriving and he was unnecessarily worrying. In an unusual tone, he asked him to get ready. Soon another person arrived on a tonga (booked for a to and fro journey). This man had come to stay with the saint for the night. Through the grace of Bab, Nandlal got the transport facility to take him to Anantnag.

Grata Bab would always sit facing the wall on which he would continuously spit. According to thoughtful devotees, he adopted this habit deliberately to look repulsive and thus keep away unwanted crowds excluding true devotees who stuck to him at all costs.

Pandit Shridhar Joo Dhar, ex-Conservator of Forests, of Kanyakadal (Chota Bazar), Srinagar, was one of Bab's closest devotees. It was on his persuasion that Bab returned to Srinagar, probably one year before Qabaili raid of October 1947 on Kashmir. He stayed for a year or so at the house of Pt. Shridhar Joo Dhar, which remained thronged by people (including devotees) throughout the day, even till late hours. From there, he was taken by a devotee to his residence at Kupawara. While he was at Kupawara, the Qabailis were on their onward march killing Hindus and destroying their properties. These Qabailis were informed about the presence of a Godly person, Grata Bab in the town. They raided the house where Bab was putting in. These Qabailis physically lifted Bab and threw him out of the third storey window. What a miracle! The Swami got up from the snow covered ground, and walked up back to his room. The Qabailis repeated the act. Lo and behold! the saint came up once again without receiving even a bruise. The Qabailis left the house convinced of his spiritual prowess.

At Srinagar, he stayed at the houses of several devotees. One such devotee was Shri Balbadar Dhar, who was an employee of Srinagar municipality, and lived a Sathu Bala. One day my father and I went to Shri Dhar's house with the sole purpose of requesting Bab to grace our house at Fateh Kadal with his presence. He directed us to seek OK from Shri Dhar. Shri Dhar and his wife told us that we could take him to our house after a day or two. Accordingly thereafter, we brought Swamiji to our home. Having been an inmate of the house long-long back, it was a sort of homecoming of Bab. As he stepped into the house, he recalled the name of the room (Diwan Khana) he had previously stayed in. So, we prepared his Aasan on a diwan, which he rejected. He insisted on being accommodated on the floor in a particular corner of 'Diwan Khana' close to the window overlooking the Vitasta (Jhelum). From that day onwards, he made this corner his permanent seat for about six years. Now and then, he took a day's break to visit the houses of other devotees on their request, making it a point to come back to ours in the evening. He continued the practice of spitting at the wall.

As I observed him, he lived a very simple life, without making any demands. As was his wont, he only took the morning meal. During the day he had many cups of tea, as often as tea was served to the visitors as instructed. He had a cup of highly spiced tea as his dinner. Whenever he sat for his morning meal, he offered a morsel to every one present as prasad, and himself, took whatever little was left behind. If the Thali got emptied in the process, he never asked for food for himself. It may be added here that members of Muslim community also believed in him and partook of this prasad from his Thali. Shah Brothers, a known Muslim business family of Naid Kadal, Srinagar, visited him once and insisted on sharing his left-overs.

Throughout the year, he used a Kangri (fire-pot) containing live, hot charcoal, so hot that none other could bear. At regular intervals, he would ask a devotee around to pound (Dug Dug) his back, especially the lower portion of the spine, as hard as he or she could. He used to wear Pheran throughout the year.

Apart from smoking hubble-bubble, he relished the 'chillum' too. He would recite verses from the scriptures and had a good knowledge of Sanskrit and Persian. He wrote meaningful quotes on pieces of paper, which he distributed among the visitors.

It would be worthwhile to make a mention of one incident concerning my elder brother-in-law, the late Mr. Somnath Zutshi. He fell seriously ill in the late forties. He was suffering from jaundice, which was considered incurable at that time. The disease had damaged his liver. On seeing his deteriorating condition, his wife made me to accompany her to the saint Kash Kak of Manigam. We took with us fruit and vegetables as an offering to him. While crossing a rivulet towards his house, a passer-by informed us that the Swami was seated on his ground-floor window. As we reached his house, we didn't find the Swami at the window. On entering the house, his wife informed us that he had gone to plough the fields. She told us to leave the offering in the room and look for the Swami at the field. On reaching the field, we found oxen standing still with the plough on their back. Another passer-by informed us that Kash Bab was lying asleep in the front of a shop. It took us some time to trace the shop. We found the Swami fast asleep with swarms of lice moving about on his pheran, probably to create a revulsion in us. I summoned the courage to touch and massage his feet. He woke up, and expressed his anger for disturbing him. We explained our problem with our tearful eyes. He very sternly replied that we were too late, and said further that if he interfered in the scheme of God, his hands would be chopped off with unseen swords. However, he added that Grata Bab alone could help. Obviously, he meant that the lady should have approached Grata Bab rather than him. He also admonished us for having brought fruit and vegetables, directing us that the entire stuff should be collected from his home and taken back. He further instructed us not to throw these vegetables and fruit into the close by Sendh nallah as these would kill the fish. Instead, he desired me to hang these from the cave of my house, which I did much against my parents' wishes, to comply with the saint's wishes.

On reaching Fateh Kadal, we related the whole tale to Grata Bab, who expressed his inability to do anything, saying that it was too late. He also said that the patient's wife had not the faith to seek his help in time. That very day, Mr. Zutshi went into coma and passed away at night.

After completing my post graduation in Economics and L.L.B., I returned to Srinagar where, to my dismay, I did not find Swamiji in our house. He had left only a few days before my arrival. From our house, he had been taken by his ardent devotee, Pandit Bhaskar Nath Raina, to his house at Rainawari. From there he had gone to several houses of his devotees, finally landing in the house of another close devotee, Pandit Jia Lal Koul (Jalali). Pt. Jalali had provided him a separate room in the out-house. I continued to pay my obeisance to the saint almost daily during Summer, as during Winter I used to be in Jammu.

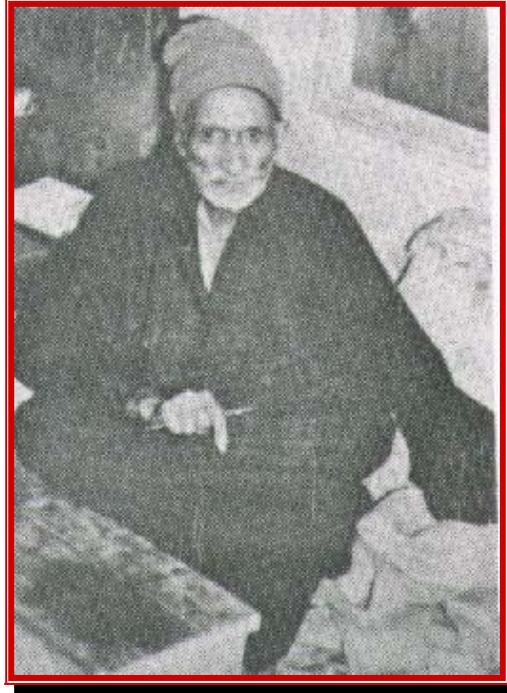
I had a great regard and love for Grata Bab, and he always reciprocated my feelings of love for him. With aging, though he showed some signs of exhaustion, his face retained its spiritual glow. It was Ashad Krishna Paksh Ekadashi. Being my birthday, I, as usual, went to Bab to seek his blessings. I was taken aback to find that he had breathed his last that very morning. I stayed on to attend to his last rites at the cremation ground, Karan Nagar. If my memory does not fail me, it was the year 1962 when he attained his Nirvana. Since then he has continued to lead me as 'kindly light.'

Source: **Koshur Samachar**

35.0 KISH BAB

A Supreme Mystic

Man Mohan Thaploo



Kish Bab

Keshav Nath Koul popularly known as Kish Bab, Kish Peer, Peer Sahib, Bab, Kish Ma-ot, Darvesh Sahib etc. was born at Khah Bazaar, Anantnag, studied up to eight class in the local Mission School and was appointed as Drill Master by the then State Government, and posted to some far flung area, which his parents did not like. He, thereafter, dropped the idea of Govt. service, and started business for his subsistence in the Khah Bazaar itself. Later he shifted to the village Gowsanigund, and run a shop just outside the Ashram, the very place which had been shown to him by nature in an early vision. The verandah of his shop, the Kitchen and Gowshalla opposite to it, was destined to be his Tapobhoomi, where he practised his spiritual discipline more than his business interests.

He was a contemporary of the famous Swami Atma Ram Ji of Gowsanigund Ashram and would enter daily into the Ashram, to have morning tea with Swami Ji. He would be a casual listener to the problems, which devotees put forth before Swami Atma Ram Ji and his casual yes or no, would be considered final, and so it went on till Swami Atma Ram ji was alive. Keshav spent about 50 years of his life in this village and later shifted to New Chowk Anantnag, where he attained Nirvana on 26th December, 1986 at the age of about 96 years.

Where as the Ganges of Sanatana Dharma flowed through the Ashram of Swami Atma Ram Ji, where devotees enlightened themselves about the knowledge contained in the Vedas, the Upnishads and the Puranas; Kish Bab's shop was the confluence of various thoughts, irrespective of caste or creed. At times it was interesting scene, when Kish Bab surrounded by Children sat on the Verandah of his shop at one end, Ama Sahib, a Muslim saint of Kahleel, Tral at the other end, and Swami Atma Ram Ji on the Verandah of store-room on the other side of

the road, on a grass mat (Changij), especially kept hanging on the spot by a naih exclusively for his use on such occasions.

While sitting at his feet, you could understand that spiritualism is science, the science of mind, where your own mind is its laboratory. You could know that the body and soul are separate. You could also become aware that things happen first in the astral plane, before they are executed in the material plane, the subtle thought is more important than physical activity and one gets caught in the web, because of one's own thoughts.

He was a Siddha, a Mystic, a man above rituals, ever conscious, awake and alert. A firm believer in the law of Karma, he had seen his previous births and would not hesitate to tell that he has been head of fishermen in one of his previous births.

He would very rarely move out from his room, but would show his glimpse to his devotees at far off places. For Khatji of Bangidar he was Qutub, to whom he showed his presence once at Dantar Kadal and at another time at the gates of Mecca, when she was on Haj pilgrimage. To Sh. Nand Lal of Zaina pore, he showed his presence in the astral plane, when he momentarily collapsed in his house and was considered dead, but revived soon for a fresh lease of life many more years as blessed by Bab at the critical moment. He has shown his presence to the devotees at the shrine of Reshmool at Anantnag, Kabamarg in Duru Tehsil, Vaishnav Devi, in Jammu area, Donthsar-nag and Shirsar-nag in Konsar-nag area, Himalnag somewhere in Pulwama and at many other places.

He was a simple man, seemed to know nothing but was aware of everything around. Having fully renounced everything, he possessed only one thing and that was spirituality in practice. He had become very intimate with nature, due to his Sadhana in previous births and some efforts in this birth also. As such he could see subtle movement of souls, look into one's past and future, be a witness to some one's day to day activities and many other things at the same time, while sitting in his room.

Was not he right when in the last week of December, 1986, after remaining in trance for the whole day, he said, "Kashmir is heading for very bad days, the Hindus shall have to flee from here," and I laughed. citing the example of Feb. 1986, when the Central Government acted in time and restored normalcy within days. He further continued, "thereafter the fundamentalists shall have no future, they shall be killed one by one. DAND TUJI SUMB TI LABAN NA KANH Rama's name shall prevail from every where I have been granted three days of grace and I have to leave."

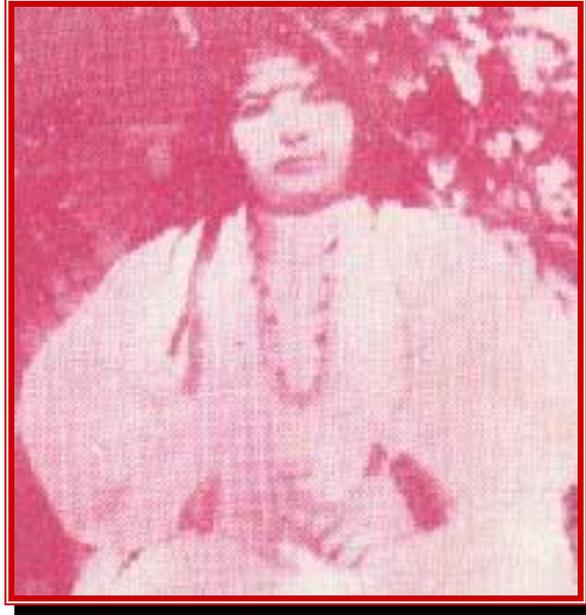
He was a great master, unique in his habits, neither a learned scholar, nor a Mahatma in the traditional sense, but a mystic like Reshpeer and a devotee of Shiva like legendary SOUDE VOUNE, both blended into one.

Source: **Koshur Samachar**

36.0 MATHRA DEVI

Lalla Reborn

Sarwanand Koul 'Premi Kashmiri'



Mathra Devi

Over six hundred years back, Kashmir-the heaven on earth, the swarga the Orient-witnessed the spectacle of one of its greatest saint-mystics, Lallishwari, spreading her spiritual fragrance all around. Known also as Lalla Ded, she gave Kashmir and the world her immortal Vakhs, which have since remained ever-fresh, and full of spiritual fervour Lalla's Vakhs are recited by thousands of Kashmiris with all devotion even now, the age of science and technology. In the country-side of Kashmir, even the cities and towns, no musical assembly starts without recitation of Lalla Vakhs.

Lalla was followed by Roopa Bhawani in whose memory Sahib Saptami, is celebrated with a Mahayagya and other religious programmes. Then came our mystic-saint tapaswani, Mathra Devi, in the 19-20th century. The Devi threw off her mortal frame, after 106 years, at Verinag on January 5, 1985. An embodiment of sadhana and tapasya, Mathra was in many respects the Lalla reborn.

Born in the Kashmiri Hindu family of Pandit Hari Koul at Verinag, the spot associated with Nilanag and his Nilamatapurana and mentioned as Vurnag in Rajatarangini, She was born on Shravana Shukla Ashtami, Samvat 1935, corresponding to 1878 A.D. It is said that Mathra was born near a cremation ground.

From her very childhood, Mathra, her pet family name, had a great love and earnestness for the search after truth. She grew with all love for Godly things, God's name and spiritual intimacy. She always demonstrated an unfamiliar and surprising attitude towards her home and the world around her.

She was married to Shri Bhagwan Dass Kandroo Bhagalal of Anantnag at the age of 14-15 years, but the marriage lasted about three years only when her husband passed away in his teens.

Being young, healthy and beautiful, with all her fervour for the divine and the spiritual, Mathra returned to her parental home at Verinag. Here she practiced her spiritual sadhana and tapasya along with her younger and only brother, Pandit Gobind Koul, who was also, like his sister, mad after search for God and Truth. It was at this stage of her life that God's grace was showered over her in the form of her spiritual Guru, Pandit Shridhar Joo Sharabi of Srinagar. The Guru guided his young disciple with all love, care and bhakti.

After some years, Mathra, with the help of her brother, Pandit Gobind Koul, who had by then become well known for his pious, religious and philanthropic life, constructed a Kutuya for her tapasya on the bank of Vitasta (Jhelum river with its source at Verinag) running close to her parental house. In the ground floor of the Kutuya, she got dug a pitch for her sadhana. It was from this pitch that Mathra emerged as Mathra Devi, after an unbroken tapasya for three years, her face blazing with divine fervour, bright lustre and spiritual insight-Lalishwari was reborn as Mathra Devi. Hundreds of people of all persuasions started thronging the Kutuya of Mathra Devi daily from the surrounding areas, even from far off Srinagar to experience peace and tranquillity, which they got in sufficient measure by their mere proximity to the Devi.

Mathra Devi, however, could not be bound down by the atmosphere created by her halo in and around Verinag. She took it as an attachment and worldly bandhan in yet another form and was on the lookout for an opportunity to get free from it. The opportunity presented itself during 1940-41 when the holy festival of Dashahar at Shadipur in the northeast of the Valley was test approaching. Starting for the yatra to Shadipur. She left her parental Verinag to which she was to return after 27 years in 1967.

From Shadipur, Mathra Devi came to Srinagar and made the Shivalaya Temple, Chotta Bazar, her abode. The Shivalaya premises then was a desolate, barren, rough and unhealthy place. And it was this place which turned into a spiritual centre by the stay for some time there of the Devi. Looking back, it does not seem a mere coincidence that the same Shivalaya premises now houses an up-coming, attractive and charming spiritual complex the Rama Krishna Ashrama with a meditation hall, an auditorium, a library and a free health clinic in a neat and clean atmosphere. The adjacent Shiva Temple is also in a better shape now. May be Mathra Devi chose the then forsaken premises for her temporary abode about forty-five years with the idea of converting it into a lasting spot for meditation and peace.

It was from the Shivalaya complex at Srinagar that the Devi spread her spiritual message to thousands of devotees and others through her upadeshas and vyakhyans on topics like character building, social reforms, and the thirst for Truth. It was here that she grew her jattas like that of Lalishwari. During this time her body became somewhat heavy, again like that of Lalla Ded but attractive. It was while Mathra Devi was still gracing the Shivalaya that her most outstanding vyakhyan at Shivaratnagiri of Durganag fame. Swamiji requested her to shift to Durganag where he arranged a separate Kutuya with some attendants for her.

The centre shifted to Durganag, where the Devi would bless hundreds of devotees daily. It became another Ashrama to which endless streams of people high and low-men, women and children flocked daily to listen to the blessed and informed religious and spiritual discourses by the mystic-saint innumerable people bringing in simple and wholesome vegetarian eatables, cooking and preparing snacks, meals for one another.

It was from Durganag that the Devi was taken back to Verinag by her brother, Pandit Gobind Koul, his son, Pandit Prithvi Nath Koul, and her disciples in 1967. It was Verinag again which

the Devi blessed for another seventeen years, till she became one with the One above on the triyodashi of Pausha Shukla Paksha of Samvat 2041, corresponding to January 5, 1985. In between, Mathra Devi visited her late husband's place only once. Pandit Shamboo Nath Kandroo, the only survivor of her husband's family, a very pious and dharmic gentleman, made her stay for 3-4 months and served her and devotees well.

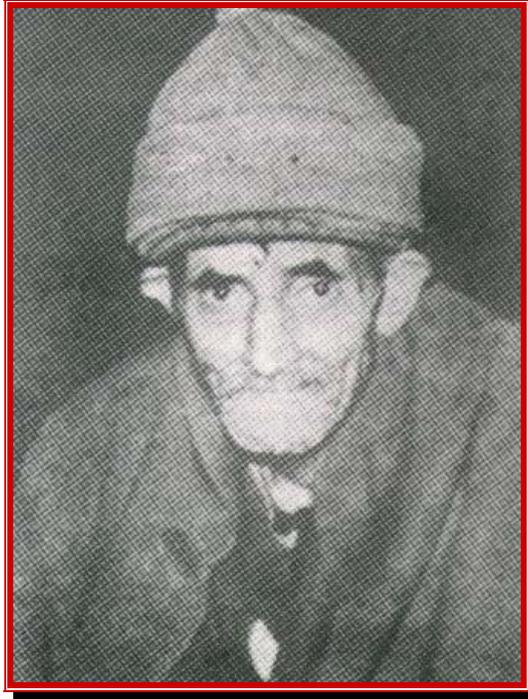
Thousands of mourners, Hindus and Muslims alike joined the Devi's arthi amidst sky rending slogans of Mathra Devi Amar Hai, Mathra Devi ki Jai. The pyre was lit by Pandit Shamboo Nath Kandroo, the only survivor on her husband's side, as per tradition.

[Taken from the *Martand* January 25, 1985 issue]

Source: **Koshur Samachar**

37.0 SWAMI ANAND JI MAHARAJ OF VILLAGAM

J. L. Nehru



Swami Anand Ji Maharaj

Swami Anand Ji Maharaj has proved to be a magnificent guru among the gurus as defined in Kularnava Tantra.

"Many are the Gurus who are proficient to the utmost in Vedas and Shastras; but rare is the Guru who has attained to the Supreme Truth; many are the Gurus on earth who give what is other than self; but rare is the Guru who brings to light the Atman; and rare is the Guru who removes the disciple's afflictions. Again rare is the Guru who is devoid of all volition to find. He is the Guru by whose very contact there flows the Supreme."

Paying obeisance to God Ganesh and to my esteemed Guru Swami Anand Ji Maharaj. I have mustered courage in a difficult situation to portrait a small fraction of His life and work after seeking permission of Pt. Shamboo Nath Dhar, Gund Gushi Distt Kupwara Swami Ji's blessed disciple presently putting up at Jammu after migration. The permission was necessarily to be sought as Swami Ji had never allowed any publicity. He was not a believer of ostentatious popularity. His disciples offer prayers in a small "Ashram" in Jammu and perform daily Puja. He would advise his disciples to elude anger, arrogance and wicked persons. Although the living generations happen to know Him in perfect Guru "Swaroop" but to keep him living in the hearts of the generations to come which He is always; in depth desire was felt to portrait some aspects of this great saint Swami Ji was called with affection Bab Sahib. The life of Bab Sahib as wide and deep as the infinite ocean in which we can dive deep so as to take precious gems of Bhakti. The stories are wonderful and give peace and happiness to those who are afflicted with distress and heavy miseries of this material world. His teachings and His divine facial impression shall remain carved ever in our hearts. Although physically weak but always with a smiling and divine radiant face Bab Sahib was always calm, serene and throughout unostentatious. He was always

free from anger, and very soft-spoken. Almost all people who came into touch with Bab Sahib got deeply influenced by his spiritual attainments.

37.1.1 Early Life

Bab Sahib's birth anniversary falls on - Asun Krishan Paksha Dwadashi and death anniversary on Saptami of Ashad Shukla Paksh. Bab Sahib's father Pt. Raghav Ram Bhat, literate in Persian and Urdu originated from Vaskura Sumbal, Kashmir and had migrated later to Villagam, Distt Handwara, Kashmir in search of his livelihood where he started his career as a teacher. He got married to Pt. Savram's daughter who was graced by Deity Nandkishore of Sumbal Asthapan. Deity Nandkishore came in dream to Pt. Raghav Ram which turned true. The Deity directed that He would come to Villagam to avoid their frequent coming to Sumbal Holy place. Pt. Raghav Ram Bhat had six sons and two daughters. Bab Sahib was his fourth child and remained a bachelor. Bah Sahib's mother would draw her hair open and get into ecstasy number of times obviously the Deity entering her belly. She would thus speak differently. Deity Nandkishore appeared on the willow tree branch in Villagam situated on the river lank. It was "Chetra" Purnima idols of Deity Nandkishore and Shivlingam were installed. A Yagna was performed on this day. Bab Sahib constructed a temple there and after a few days a spring oozed to everybody's surprise. This spring has green waters. Bab Sahib started performing annual yagna thereafter.

37.1.2 Shifting to Srinagar (Kashmir)

The exact year is not known when Bab Sahib came to Srinagar with the aim of seeking employment and got engaged in Pt. Dina Nath Dullu's house at Karan Nagar, Srinagar. Pt. Dina Nath Dullu was working in the forest department. Years passed by. Bab Sahib had dedicated himself to spiritual activity not known to anyone in the house though being so close to everyone. He had been travelling on wooden Khadaon (Kashmiri wooden sleeper) in the mid-night to "Vichar Naag" nearly 10 kms. away for twelve long years and would be seen in his room in the early morning hours before dawn. Once Pt. Dullu Sahib felt thirsty in the midnight and requested his wife to bring water from kitchen. As the right time had approached now Mrs. Dullu while drawing near to the kitchen where Swami Ji's room fell on the other side got horrified to find that violent fire had engulfed Bab Sahib's room. Immediately crying for help she went to her husband's room and her husband got up quickly and rushed towards Swami Ji's room. He found to his surprise an immense dazzling divine light in Swami Ji's room. Next morning in the early hours Pt. Dullu Sahib fell on the feet of Bab Sahib and made obeisance. Bab Sahib to avert the exposure of the truth accused Mr. Dullu that he had perhaps fallen prey to some evil spirit which had made him to speak irrelevant. He asked Mr. Dullu that he should approach some learned Brahmin who would treat him by reciting some Mantra. How could Pt. Dullu believe it who had to his amazement seen divine radiant light. Bab Sahib's divinity got spread in the family circles and around.

Bab Sahib performed Yagna at Vichar Naag and invited Dullu's family as well. Dullu's family came to know that day that Bab Sahib had been going to Vichar Naag for twelve long years which was kept secret.

37.1.3 Pt. Shamboo Nath's Contact

Pt. Shamboo Nath Ji Gushi, Kupwara, Bab Sahib's close disciple came into his contact in the year 1957. Pt. Shamboo Nath working as Senior Laboratory Assistant in the A.S. College, Srinagar attached to Prof. Kilam was residing with him in the "Stone House" at Karan Nagar. He had lost his wife sometime back and he would normally weep bitterly also start playing with iron "chimta" to the extent that once Prof. Kilam's daughter had termed him as a partly insane man.

In fact Pt. Shamboo Nath Ji was in search of Guru to lead him to the path of spirituality. Once walking through Char China near the National High School building in Karan Nagar, we saw to his surprise an idol of Lord Vishnu seated on the window of the Bab Sahib's room. When Pt. Shamboo Nath went towards Dullu's house and entered Bab Sahib's room he did not find any such idol there. Pt. Shamboo Nath fell on the feet of Bab Sahib and wept bitterly. He asked him whether he would like to remarry to which he replied in negative. Bab Sahib advised him to have some daily rituals and recite some Mantras.

37.1.4 Shifting to Khir Bhawani

Bab Sahib nearly spent 4.0 years in Dullu's family including 10 to 12 years after the spiritual exposure. He then shifted to Khir Bhawani an exotic holy place nearly 25 kms. from Srinagar in the year 1967. There he started putting up in the first floor of Shri Gwash Ram's small house, rather a shopping complex type facing the Goddess "Raginya" and the spring temple. On every Ashtami and Purnima Bab Sahib would perform Puja on a grand scale with various offerings in the Holy Spring like Milk, Flowers and Kheer etc. Many of his disciples have observed that at the time of offerings an image of "Devi Chakra" would get formed and start swinging obviously Devi's blessings. A good number of pilgrims and other people who would throng the Khir Bhawani Shrine would have meals at the Bab Sahib's abode. This "NAVEED" would give bliss the Bakhtas.

37.1.5 Miracles and Telepathic Powers

Death of Elder Brother Shri Parmanand Ji

Once a message got spread that Bab Sahib's oldest brother Shri Parmanand had expired but miraculously had revived to life as a surprise. When Pt. Parmanand Ji regained consciousness he started speaking in a different language not understood by common people and would never stop. Bab Sahib although being younger to his brother, reprimanded him to put a halt to these mutterings. However, Pt. Parmanand narrated that when his astral body was taken to Lord Yama's abode, he found Bab Sahib as well sitting in one of the judgment seats with bowing head apart from "Chitra Gupta". Pt. Parmanand Ji made a sort of complaint about his younger brother that He behaved in a manner as if He had no relation whatsoever with him. Bab Sahib reacted and uttered that only good "Karmas" are viewed and not the relations there.

37.1.6 Rescuing Aeroplane Piloted by Rajiv Gandhi

Prof. Kilam Sahib's wife was travelling in an aeroplane from Srinagar to Jammu piloted by Late Rajiv Gandhi. All of a sudden some technical snag obstructed the aeroplane and the situation had come to obvious crashing. Bab Sahib appeared in the aeroplane and sat adjacent to Mrs. Kilam's seat, the technical snag miraculously got rectified and the aeroplane had safe landing at Jammu. The crew later came to know as late Rajiv Gandhi had observed that the aeroplane got saved from crashing because of this lady virtually due to the blessings of Swami Ji. Swami Ji was nowhere seen at Jammu in the aeroplane. Here in Srinagar He had asked repeatedly to the C.I.D. Commissioner one of the disciples to enquire whether Mrs. Kilam had safe landing at Jammu. Some days later Prof. Sahib got a letter from his wife narrating the whole incident and the miraculous saving of the aeroplane.

It was in December, 1970, when one of the close devotees who was putting up as a tenant in my house at Habba Kadal in Srinagar narrated some facets of Bab Sahib's miracles, divine elevation rued spiritual vibrations. I was totally moved as if some inner telepathy started working on me instantly. I became virtually restless to see this spiritual face. Bab Sahib was this time putting up in Tulla Mulla. It was a wintry day but happened to be not too cold. As I entered the

hut of the shopkeeper Shri Gwash Ram Ji, I was told that Bab Sahib was on the 1st floor. I entered the room and found him seated in a corner facing Goddess Ragniya's Spring. I paid obeisance and he kept his benevolent hand on my head and blessed me. I got immediately emotional. He of His own said whether I came from Habba Kadal. He untied the knot of one handkerchief and blessed me again by applying a little "Vibhuti" on my forehead and gave me "Naveed" for my family and my parents. The objective in my mind for which I had gone to Bab Sahib got fulfilled to my surprise.

37.1.7 Endless Naveed

One devotee narrated that on one occasion, after offering the last "Ahuti" in Yagna, "Khir" naveed prepared in one brass pot (Deegcha) began to be distributed among hundreds of devotees who had come to attend the Yagna. No one could assess how the small quantity just prepared in one "Deegcha" didn't finish even after having been distributed among hundreds of devotees. Bab Sahib enquired whether all had taken this "Khir Naveed" and the lady distributing it said only one person was yet to take it. Naveed was as such kept in a small Taku (small earthen plate) and the Deegcha got emptied.

I have myself witnessed Bab Sahib after coming out of Samadhi while in Khir Bhawani, having expressed the vivid presence of the Goddess Ragniya. Bab Sahib while blessing all his devotees would always utter let Almighty bloom fortune.

In October, 1973, my father took seriously ill and I went immediately to seek my Guru's blessings to know the state my father was going to face and whether he would come out of the trauma. On reaching Khir Bhawani, I was asked by Bab Sahib to perform Puja first in the temple. During Puja, the Dhoop and Diya partly extinguished and I did not take it as a bad omen. When I reached Bab Sahib's room again and with Namaskar prostrated myself under his feet, He, in the first impression, asked what did the Goddess convey and immediately diverted my attention so that my morale does not breaks. My father expired after some days thereafter, which was a clear indication of Bab Sahib's Divine attainment.

In mid-1996 Bah Sahib came to me in dream twice when I was in extreme trauma due to the ailment of my wife. He untied the knot of his handkerchief and gave me Naveed. He had a divine smile on his face. The doctors had given maximum survival period of three months to my wife but that she survived for seventeen months was a miracle. Prior to her expiry in August'97, He came again and this time He showed the sign of her end which also came true. It is, therefore, evident that Bab Sahib is keeping an eye over the troubles of his devotees.

37.1.8 Last Darshan

It was year 1983 Swami Ji tell indisposed and had developed kidney trouble. The disciples called Dr. Radha Krishna Kachroo to Kilam's house at Shivpora but He was later shifted to Dr. Peshin's Hospital at Karan Nagar in Srinagar. Dr. Peshin had observed the failure of kidney and had tried his best. Normally Bab Sahib's condition never appeared grim even to suspect something serious. He had a smile on His face and appeared in usual trim condition. At around 3.50 p.m. on 17th July, 1983, He left mortal body. He was shifted to Shivalaya Temple premises in Karan Nagar, Srinagar where thousands of devotees had thronged after hearing the news of His attaining Moksha on A.I.R. Kashmir station. The last rites were performed with full Shraddha. When the pyre was lit, single Jyoti rose high to the sky like a shooting star. There was a little drizzling as well thus having been accepted by Heavenly Spiritual Power. In Shivalaya where thousands of devotees were reciting Bhajans, "Brahma Vidhya" was recited by one person whereas five sounds vibrated concurrently to everybody's surprise.

37.1.9 Immersion of Ashes

Before leaving mortal body Bab Sahib had desired a week earlier that He would like to sit under cool breeze of Chinar Tree in specific referring to the place Gushi Kupwara or Khir Bhawani. When preparations were made to take the Ashes to Sangam at Shadipur Sangam for immersion, the vehicle in which these were being carried somehow mystically led the driver to divert towards Khir Bhawani road instead of Shadipur Sangam direct. Here Pt. Shamboo Nath Ji got reminded of Bab Sahib's desire to have a cool breeze under a Chinar Tree. The disciples decided to immerse some ashes in the Khir Bhawani Sangam River. The team after immersing some ashes here fell far Shadipur Sangam and immersed the ashes there. Surprisingly again after immersion Devi Chakra got formed on the Sangam waters.

Source: **Koshur Samachar**

38.0 PANDIT SATLAL SIBOO

Dr. Chaman Lal Raina



Pandit Satlal Siboo

Mysterious are the ways of nature, which produce vibrations for accelerating the psychophysical potential in the embodied soul. Para-Prakrati is evolutionary process explained in the Kashmir-Shakta school of thought. The 'Bhawani Sahasranama' establishes this fact, which brings co-existence in 'Mood-Prakrati and 'Mool-Prakrati," says a son of the soil of Kashmir, Pandit Satlal Siboo, who was born on the 10th day of August 1902.

Since I was very curious to know the origin of the seven-vibrations which do influence the 'Sapta-Matrikas' during 'Matrika-Pujan', I, in my humble way, met this aged person, wearing pheran, and had the good fortune to hear to his spoken words in his three-storeyed house near Habbakadal (Purshayar). This was in the sixties.

To evolve his spiritual awakening for realising the self, he had taken voluntary retirement from the J&K Fire Services and had engaged himself in Sadhna at his second-floor room, popularly known as 'Kani'. His Sadhna was unique as he meditated upon the Ishta-Devi - Sri Ragniya, in the form of 'Prakrati' and Bhuteshwara in the form of 'Pursha' and then recite the Bija-Mantras.

When asked about this style of Sadhna, he would say: "Sadhna is a process to enlighten every nerve cell through the recitation of 'Bija-Mantra'. These 'Bija-Mantras' form the spirit of Shruti and, through the divine vibration of the absolute, form the particular facet of Devi or Devta." His Sadhna would also include worship of an embossed Sri Yantra in the 'Kadi' tradition as Shakta method was also known to him.

The beauty of Kashmir saints is that they establish Dharma through human service. We have a chain of such great saints - Swami Ramji and Mehtab Kak of Trika Ashram, Nandalal Ji

Mastana, Anand Ji of Vilgam, Swami Lakshman Ji, Bhagwan Gopinath Ji and others. They showed us the path to reach the goal as the Kashmiri Pandit spiritual psyche flourished on the Vedic teachings and Kashmir Siva-Shakta tradition to understand self.

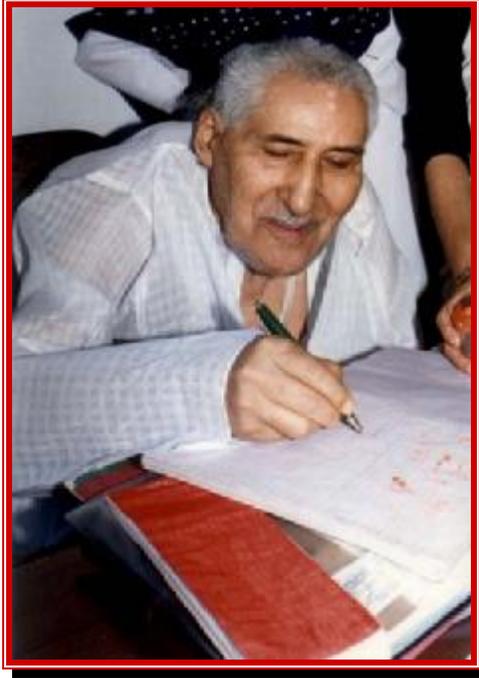
Pt. Satlal Siboo taught and initiated the Shakta tradition to those who came in contact with him. He would also give Bhasma to ailing persons reciting the Mahamritunjaya Mantra with its Gayitri for many diseases. During his youth he had met Angoor-Bhaba of Angoori Ashram and Dhandi Swami had excelled in the ancient system of medicine. For some years, he was a practitioner at the Angoori Ashram's Kralakhud branch but during the later part of his life, when he had attained a higher stage of spiritual awakening, he would rely on Mantra-therapy only.

I have the personal experience of his magic touch. I was ailing for many years as I was wrongly operated upon for melanoma. I could not be properly treated at the AIIMS, PGI, Chandigarh, and other institutions. When I returned to Srinagar, I just rushed to him. He asked me to come the next day when it was dawning. Amidst the dawn chorus, I reached his place and found him praying to his Ishta-Devi. Just after his prayers he applied Bhasma on my operated area and recited some mantras. I got completely cured.

This Shakta traditionalist attained Nirvana on the 19th day of October 1987 but his religio-philosophic message is still echoing in the hearts of his devotees. He is also revered in Mukerian (Punjab) and some other places.

Source: **Koshur Samachar**

39.0 PANDIT RAGHU NATH KUKILOO



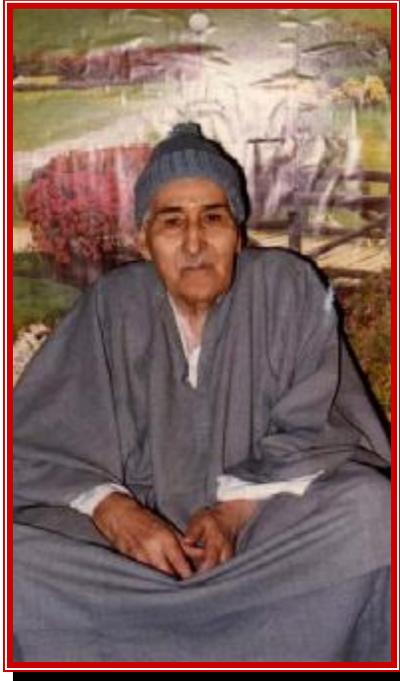
Pandit Raghu Nath Kukiloo

39.1 NSKRI offers homage to Pandit Raghu Nath Kukiloo

NSKRI deeply condoles the passing away of Pandit Raghu Nath Kukiloo - saint, scholar and astrologer of great reputation popularly known as "Baigaash". The news of his sad demise was received with great shock by the exiled Kashmiri Pandit community which is already reeling under the impact of losing two of its best known scholars, Prof P. N. Pushp and Pandit Janki Nath Kaul 'Kamal' in just one year or so.

The end came on December 23, 1997 at about 3 P.M. when Pandit Kukiloo had just finished distributing Prasaad among devotees and disciples after his daily worship and had hardly taken a morsel or two of his lunch, according to "Maalini", the quarterly journal of IshwarAshram Trust, Ishber, Srinagar. Suddenly, says the journal, he felt the divine effulgence of Kundalini engulfing him. Trying to address the divine presence, he went into a trance from which he never woke up. Pandit Raghu Nath Kukiloo has, however, left behind him his hallowed memories for the host of his disciples and admirers in the community who looked to him for guidance in spiritual as well as mundane matters. They regarded him as a great yogi, an erudite scholar and a master of astrology gifted with the extraordinary power of clairvoyance.

Born in a scholarly family in the Banamohalla locality of Srinagar in the year 1911, the widely respected Pandit was spiritually inclined from childhood. A Shakta by faith, he was a devotee of the Goddess Tripurasundari. When in Srinagar he would never miss the daily Parikrama (circumambulance) of Sharika Devi at Hari Parvat, according to Shri R.C. Kaul Pamposh an old disciple of Pandit Kukiloo. While he had fathomed the depths of the Shakta philosophy of Kashmir, which he would interpret in his own unique manner, Pandit Kukiloo's understanding of the Vedantic and Shaiva philosophies was equally profound. He was known for his performance of the annual Pancharatra puja on the occasion of Mahashivaraatri.



Pandit Raghu Nath Kukiloo

Pandit Kukiloo is said to have had a close association with the great Shaivaacharya of Kashmir, Swami Lakshman Joo. Swamiji would make it a point to obtain the blessings of Pandit Kukiloo on his birthday, showing in what high esteem he held him.

Pandit Raghu Nath was a sensitive soul who was moved by the sufferings of the people which he tried to mitigate in his own way through the methods of astrology. The number of people who



Pandit Raghu Nath Kukiloo

believed that he could divine the future through accurate astrological predictions was legion, the Pandit having become a living legend in Kashmir. But what endeared him to everyone was his readiness to make himself available to the elite and the commoner alike for consultation and help.

Like hundreds of thousands of his suffering community men, Pandit Kukiloo was forced to leave Kashmir in 1990 under the terrorist threat and take residence at Jammu where he continued with his scholarly and spiritual occupations at 29, Ashok Nagar till his last breath.

While conveying its heartfelt sympathies to the bereaved members of his family, NSKRI joins the entire Kashmiri Pandit community in paying its humble homage to the departed saint and scholar.

Courtesy: **Vivek Raina** for providing the pictures.

Source: **Unmesh**

40.0 SWAMI MAST RAM JI

Subhash Dhar



Swami Mast Ram Ji

Picture Courtesy: Anjali and Ravi Raman Raina, Houston, Texas

Swami Mast Ram Jee was born in 1931 at Budlada, (Punjab) in a well to do family of peasants. His original name is Sohan Lal. From his childhood days, Swami Jee had been nursing different feelings about life and worldly affairs and would spend most of his time in chanting the name of the Lord. Parmarth appears to have been enshrined in his life right from the day of his birth.

At the age of 23, he was married to Smt. Hukum Devil Disillusioned with worldly life, Swamijee left his family consisting of three infants only after six years of marriage, in search of God. He travelled throughout India but found his ultimate destination in Kashmir where he submitted himself before His Holiness Swami Nand Lal Ji Maharaj at Tikker in district Kupwara. After testing his devotion, Swami Nand Lal Ji renamed him as Mast Ram. Thus began an era of Guru-Shishya relationship. Mast Ram Jee thereafter wholeheartedly remained at the feet of his Guru Maharaj. Swami Mast Ram Ji was so engrossed in his sadhana that even when children would disturb him during meditation, he would keep always smiling. In due course, he attained great heights and became one of the jewels in the crown of his Guru Maharaj.

After the Nirvana of his Guru Maharaj, he established an Ashram at Badipora in Dist. Badgam and another one at Patoli in Jammu. On every Ashtami, Swami Jee performs Yagna and organises free langer for thousands of participants.

After migration from Kashmir, Swami Jee threw open his Ashram in Jammu to the migrants, till they found alternative accommodation. Swami Jee's life is an open book and he believes in Samadrashti. His Ashram always reverberates with sounds of bhajans and Kirtan which is the path to salvation in this Kaliyuga.

Swami Jee has also established his Ashrams in Delhi and Haridwar. The vast Ashram at Haridwar is open to everybody without any charges and free food is also provided to pilgrims. Swami Jee speaks fluent Kashmiri and sings all Kashmiri bhajans with effortless ease. His devotees are a blessed lot because he never keeps them wanting and waiting whenever they call on him for his blessings. He believes in karma and preaches peace.

Swami Jee is full of siddhis, but does not believe in performing miracles, except where the need arises for the benefit of his devotees and humankind. It is not possible to illustrate and mention about his miracles. These must be seen to be believed. Swami Jee, however, in a guarded way, has indeed mentioned about the likely happenings in the valley.

Swamijee has done a yeomen service to Kashmiri literature through a collection named as Sahaj Kosam which contains the bhajans of famous Kashmiri poets. This book is a treasure of Kashmiri literature and Bhakti culture. The book contains the life history and poetry of 23 famous great sons of Kashmiri Pandit community. Every Kashmiri devotee is invited by Swami Jee to take benefit of his stay at Haridwar. The Ashram, which is located at the 7th mile from Har Ki Pauri on Haridwar Rishikesh road, has been built by him in the memory of his Guru Maharaj Swami Nand Lal ji. One has just to take an auto rickshaw from Har ki Pauri and get down near the samadhi of Kaulu Siddha. On the left can be seen the name plate Mastbab Ashram (Kashmiri ware). His disciples take the benefit of Swami Jee's stay at Haridwar for self-realisation. He normally stays in the Ashram throughout the year.

Source: **Koshur Samachar**

41.0 THAKURJOO MANWATI

Poet-Saint of Kashmir

Jagannath (Gash) Manwati

Having weathered 84 years of my life, I am the last living member of Manwati clan who has had the honour of having lived about 15 years of his life concurrently with revered Thakurjoo Manwati, my first uncle.

A perfect householder, 'Baijigur', as we used to call him, had two sons and two daughters. His elder son Lt. Sarwanand was issueless and his second son Lt. Vedlal was not blessed with a male sibling, so I filled the vacuum and became the pet child in the family who used to tuck himself along 'Baijigur' for nearly seven years of my formative and impressionable age till he attained his Nirvana in 1999. It is perhaps 'Baijigur's grace that I vividly remember many eye-witnessed episodes of his life without the time-lag effect.

A teacher by profession, Thakurjoo has acquired the degrees of Munshi Fazil, an Honours in Urdu, on the basis at which he was, perhaps, appointed a teacher in a government primary school. But he had mastered Sanskrit, Persia and even Arabic on his own volition which helped him in the deep study of the Vedantic scriptures, the Quran and the Bible. He was a voracious reader, a prolific writer and an impromptu composer.

Thakurjoo's services took him from village to village, his longest posting being at Sopore. Not much is, therefore, known about the earlier years of his life. However, towards the fag end of his career, he was transferred to Gurgari Mohalla Primary School in Srinagar. It is said that Bawa Balwant Singh, the then Inspector of Schools, reportedly an awesome and disciplined officer, on his couple of annual inspections to this school found always 'Alif', the first alphabet in Urdu, written on the black-board of the classroom. On a subsequent inspection, he made a caustic remark, "Masterji, I find you and your students are still on 'Alif' even after three years." Masterji, with all humility, which was the hallmark of his character, explained for more than half an hour the esoteric meaning of the alphabet. The inspector was flabbergasted and apologised for his sarcastic remark and simultaneously offered if he could do anything for him. Masterji pleaded that he should not be transferred from the school till his retirement, because "it is here that I have merged with Alif."

Recently I saw a poem composed by my daughter-in-law. I reproduce an extract of the poem which is pertinent in the context and perhaps a quintessence of Thakurjoo's explanation of 'Alif'.

***Be it Alif or call it Cardinal One
It Represents Cosmic Oneness
Its Manifestation of 'Allah' and 'Adidev'
Whenever I ventured to Walk
Without the Staff of 'Alif'
Like a Blind I was lost in the Universe***

Like Mahatma Gandhi, in his post-retirement years, Masterji used to organise evening prayer meetings at Dewan Bagh - now Karan Nagar, where people from all walks of life and strata used to assemble to hear his discourses in which he used to quote profusely from the Gita, and the Bible.

A strict vegetarian, 'Baijigur' was no advocate of rituals or dogmas. There was no traditional 'Thakur-Kuth' (household pooja room) in his small dwelling. A room strewn and stacked with books in the house was his 'Karma-sthan', where he would be immersed in the books and often

lost in deep pensive moods. He firmly believed that the Supreme Lord lived within everyone and search for Him outside was an exercise in futile.

<verses>

***(Your body is the repository of all Gyan (knowledge). You have'nt to look for it outside)
(Often at his prayer meetings, he would exhort people to keep clean their mind/conscience
of worldly dirt and dust.***

<verses>

***(Keep your mind sparkingly clean.
Divested of dirt and rust.
Accept this, I say, as the essence of life)***

It is sad that the original manuscript of 'Amrit Sagar', a collection of his 200 and odd poems, mostly in Kashmiri, unfolding the subtleties of Spiritual Truth, based on his personal experience, is not traceable.

Each poem had on the top the 'Raga' mentioned on which it was based and metered, which gave insight into his knowledge of Shastriya Sangeet. Often he would correct Govind Baba, a musician disciple of his if he would commit an error in putting a certain poem to particular raga.

There always used to be gathering of religious scholars, mendicants and sadhus coming from distant places like Banares and down South having discussions and deliberations on divergent features of metaphysics. Though the pecuniary position of the family was not that bright, yet there used to be 10-12 persons there daily who would partake food at his place. Lest this would earn a frown in the family, Masterji would often remind:

<verses>

***(How can we, who are ourselves
Guests in the world
Claim to play host to one another
When the fact remains,
It is His Grace which ensures
Victuals for us all.)***

I remember there was a big earthen pitcher kept outside his room which used to be filled with fresh water on each Sunday morning. Thakurjoo would put his hand and stir the water reciting some inaudible mantras. This water used to be sought after by people of all faiths coming from far-off places like Baramulla and Muzaffarabad for treatment of malaria which was quite prevalent in those days. Sunday was called 'Aushadi Day' in the household.

Some six months before Masterji attained his Mahasamadhi, he bade a tearful farewell to his pet cow 'Parvati' and sent her to Sopore wherefrom she was brought. The incident of the cow's departure created a sort of commotion in the house. When my father enquired about it, 'Baijigur' said: "Why grieve? Parvati has gone to her home, soon I shall depart for mine "<verses>" (These mortal remains are now tattered beyond repair.) Some time later, a carbuncle appeared on his stomach which proved fatal.

This humble teacher has attained venerable status of a Guru and the aroma of his preaching had mingled with the air of Kashmir. No wonder then that on the day of his Mahasamadhi, right from his residence at Gund Ahalmar, Srinagar, to the cremation ground at Dewar Bagh, all the shopkeepers downed their shutters and joined the funeral procession with Raghunath Rathi - the famous bard of the times leading the Viman procession singing his poems.

Later, portraying the mood of the people on the day of Mahasamadhi of the poet-saint of Kashmir, Rathi wrote an elegy, paying his tributes to Thakurjoo Manwati which became a household 'cry' in Kashmir.

<verses>

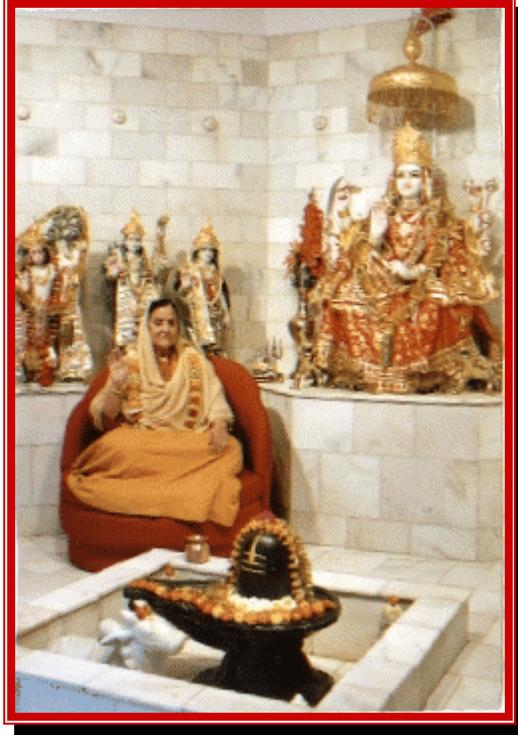
May the nectar of Thakurjoo's preaching keep the celestial fire burning in all the hearts.

Source: **Koshur Samachar**

42.0 KARUNAMAI MAA

The benevolent mother

Piyaray Lal Raina



Karunamai Maa in Ashram Temple (1999)

On October 28, 2000, Hindu community and particularly Kashmiri Pundits lost one of its modern day saints who had achieved *siddhi* in her lifetime by taking *samadhi* in New Delhi. It was indeed a sad day for the followers of *Karunamai maa*.

42.1.1 Background

Karunamai Maa was born in 1913 in a devout Kashmiri Pandit family of Kichloo's on Nag Panchami and was named Bimla. The family priest Surikant Joshi of Bijbehara in Kashmir who had himself achieved *siddhi* by worshipping *Param Shakti Ragannya Bhagwati* (Khir Bhawani) initiated her into *shakti sadna* at an early age. She wanted to be a *sanyasin* but her guru advised her to live a normal *grehesti* life. She therefore was married in a well to do Kashmiri family of *Channas* in New Delhi.

Although she lived a life of common *grahesti* woman with her three sons, she was always engaged in attending and conducting *satsangs* in New Delhi for about 30 years. Many who attended her *satsangs* became her dedicated disciples and started calling her Karunamai Maa - the benevolent mother.

42.1.2 Shree Karunamai Maa Shakti Peeth

Until 1989, she would regularly go to Kashmir (Khir Bhawani) for meditation. In 1989, she decided to establish a *shaktipeeth* at a place known as Sanp ki Nangli near Sohna in Gurgaon

District of Haryana State (about 50 kms south of New Delhi). This *shaktipeeth* came to be known as *Shree Karunamai Maa Shakti Peeth*. She procured about 10 acres of land there and with the help of her disciples she constructed a beautiful temple dedicated to *Maa Durga* (Ragnya) with a big hall which can accommodate up to 500 attendees at a time. She also built a small residential cottage for herself where she lived with her chief disciples. Additional construction was done to accommodate pilgrims, a library, a medical clinic, and sevaks. The land around the temple was converted into a beautiful garden with flowers and greenery. Fruit trees such as mango, amrud, papayas, lemons were planted. To meet requirements of eatables for the residents wheat and vegetables were cultivated. A number of cows were added to meet the requirements of milk and milk products. Neem trees have been grown all round the periphery for providing clean and calm environment. The devotees feel enchanted and spirited at the very sight of this Ashram.

Karunamai Maa had achieved siddhi at a young age. She preferred to be left alone to meditate and enjoy the divine bliss of which she was a symbol. This was the primary reason she chose to live in a remote rural place. But her devotees were always looking for her. Everyday the disciple cars were lined up outside the Ashram gate. On auspicious occasions, like Navratras, special arrangements for devotees and car parking had to be made. She never installed a telephone in the Ashram as she thought it would further distract her peace.

42.1.3 Spirituality and Beliefs

Karunamai Maa believed in purity in all phases of life. She taught that cleanliness of mind is as essential for the spiritual growth as physical one. She adored deities in temple with choicest dresses and ornaments and was herself dressed well. She lived by the principle of "sound mind in a sound body". For achieving siddhi, she favored the route of *Japs* rather than ritualistic puja. One would see her always reciting Jap mantras with a Jap Mala concealed in a small pouch in her right hand even when she was talking to her devotees. She insisted on praying daily preferably loudly in her melodious voice to elevate her spirituality before performing Japs. She had adopted Kashmiri prayers for recitation in Ashram. Thus one would hear recitation of prayers like:

Ganesh Prayer

**Hemja Sutam Bujam Ganesham Ish Nandnam
Kalpavraksha Bhaktaraksha Namostutey Gajaanam**

Gauree Prayer

**Om Leela Rabda Sthaapit Lupthakhil Lokaam
Gauree Ambaah Ambur Haakeem Hameeday**

Bhannamsahasrastutih, Bahuroop Garbpath and Mahimnapar (with the beginning of *Aadinam agdam divyam*) were daily recited. The above prayers are purely of Kashmiri origin and are not typically recited outside of the Kashmiri Pundit families. Most of her devotees were non-Kashmiri's and they would recite them verbatim as was done in Kashmir.

During the two annual Navratras, special prayers were held with a daylong *havan'son Durga Ashtami*. Durga Mata was specially propitiated as a fountain of shakti by offering homs (svaha) as established in Bhavani Shestranavali. Karunamai Maa had great faith in Maa Durga. During the nine days of Navratras, she would often remind her disciples that Maa Durga is in a mood to forgive sins and bestowing blessings and therefore they should do as much Japs as possible over 125,000 limit. During Havans, prasad was distributed to devotees where Kashmiri style food such as plain rice, dam aloo, chok vagun, moong ki daal with nadru etc would be served to

thousands who would attend. Ashram has raised a permanent platform for distributing prasad to a large gathering.

42.1.4 Benevolent Mother

Karunamai Maa was a benevolent person at heart. Despite her old age and indifferent health, she never refused to attend to the prayers of those who came to seek her blessings. She would always give a patient hearing to them and made it a point to see that they left satisfied. She would give them a small mantra for a jap and then she kept track of the progress of the individuals problem. If no progress was reported she would give a different mantra. She called her devotees by their first name. To give maximum satisfaction to her devotees she made it a point to apply tilak and tie nariwan (mavli) round their wrists herself in spite of her physical discomfort towards her old age. She had a tradition of going to Haridwar along with her devotees for few days and after having a bath in the river Ganga along with them she would offer extensive pooja and made everyone participate in it. It used to be a great event for her devotees and they eagerly waited for this opportunity. New disciples were initiated with mantras at this time. She felt very sad for Kashmiri Hindus who suffered so much for no fault of theirs and offered prayers for their return to their motherland.

42.1.5 Social Activism

She thought it her duty to do something for the poor. She opened a Homeopathic and Ayurvedic clinic in the ashram where she invited leading doctors to treat the poor. Free medicines were distributed. For the old who suffered from the partial loss of vision she organized camps for their cataract operations. A center was opened providing sewing training to ladies. Weekly coaching classes were held for children to teach them alphabets and also helping in doing their homework. She had a deep love for children and she laid a park for them in the ashram premises in which swings and seesaws slides were fixed. Annual sports day for village children was held. Winners were presented prizes.

During Navratra celebrations, children were encouraged to recite mantras and were rewarded. On Navratra ashtami, nine small girls were selected among those who came with their parents. They were dressed representing nine goddesses and were carried in a procession to temple, their feet were washed by Maa herself. After performing their pooja, they were sent away with good money as *dakshina*.

The excitement on the faces of children and their parents as well was a sight to be seen. On these occasions, she distributed lot of new clothes among the poor. Every year she made special arrangements on a particular day to invite local village people for a pooja for their welfare that was followed by a lunch. This was her way of keeping local people in touch with all the activities in the ashram. They always attended in large numbers.

42.1.6 Other interests

Maa wrote hindi poetry. A collection of her poems has been published under the *title Maa Prasad*. One finds a touch of Kabir in her poetry. For example:

*Gyan bakti ke bina kahan miley nirman
Goru charan seva bina nahi miley bhagwan*

*Bool per bool kare apne ko dubayey
Neki kar tere kam aayey dubey koun bachy*



Kanik Puja celebration in the Ashram (2000)

Maa had a hypnotizing melodious voice which kept audience spellbound when she recited prayers or her poems. All these have been recorded. She enjoyed music and thus encouraged all those who could sing or play music.

Maa liked travelling. She traveled regularly to US, Canada, Europe, Hong Kong etc. As a matter of fact, she returned from a two-month trip of Germany and France on September 1, 2000.

42.1.7 Future Plans for Ashram

To take care of Ashram after her taking Samadhi Maa had already performed an elaborate abhishek for installing a young sanyasi who had renounced his career as a Chartered Accountant as her heir. She gave him the new name Nand Baba who possesses all the divine qualities of Nand and with the blessings of Maa he will surely carry forward the mission of Karunamai Maa's dreams.

Those who she touched in her life have been blessed. Let us all pray for her everlasting peace and remember her benevolent presence amongst us.

43.0 HIS HOLINESS SWAMI HALDHAR JI MAHARAJ

A Wath Sadh - abandon the Five Worldly Reactions

(Kam, Krodh, Lobh, Moh, and Ahamkar)

Kanhaiya Lal S Raina

Kashmir (The Kashyapa Bhumi) has given birth to many saints and savants from time to time. One such savant whom our lineage knew intimately was Swami Haldhar Ji Maharaj (1853-1921), a saint of high calibre and veritably a divine incarnation. Swami Haldhar Ji Maharaj was born in Kuckroo's family residing in Batapur Mohalla at Sopore Kashmir. This house produced many saints, namely late Shri Shridhar Joo Bub, and late Shri Lakshman Joo Bub.

I must admit that it is very difficult for a person like me to write about the spiritual life of Swami Ji. I beg an excuse from all esteemed readers for any erroneous interpretations, although I have tried to give it a form and shape. Initially I felt hesitant to write on the subject, for a lay man in spiritually, is nothing short of impudence. But then I remembered what Cicero said; "Not to know what took place before you were born is to remain for ever a child. For to be aware of the present without being aware of the past, is to have a deceptive view of things."

Swami Haldhar Ji was an example of an ordinary man developing into a superman under very trying circumstances. He was under the full control of an almighty Power without any offer of resistance on his part. Out of the bounty of Lord's grace, he enlightened others. Blessed indeed is the day when God made Swami Haldhar Ji entirely His own. He lived in his own-self and yet lived with masses around him. He has purified the faithful and with his all-pervading spirit continues to guide the needy and the deserving, even after attaining Mahasamadhi in 1921 on Ram Navami day. He was Ishwara in the human form. He made free use of his divine Shakti for the welfare of his devotees. Verily, Swami Ji was such a super-saint. Undoubtedly he came to family just when he was most wanted.

Further what encouraged me to write is the feeling that, talking, writing in praise of Swami Ji comes near to worshipping him. As some one has rightly said, the enlightened soul cannot remain hidden in the worldly grab, the flame of spirituality shines out, inspite of covering. Since no senior member in our family had ventured to write about Swami Ji's life during the past 80 years, I decided to bare my thoughts, instead of being stuck up by fear of facing criticism from any quarter.

I have attempted to peep into various dimensions of Swami Ji here. And whatever little I have gathered and learnt from various persons who enlightened me about Swami Ji's life just like the proverbial six blind persons who went to see the elephant, every one described the elephant as they touched and felt.

The basic idea with which this narration has been written is to acquaint those who possibly have heard of Swami Haldhar Ji Maharaj and want to know more about him. This write up could have been written about 20 years ago, when in 1981, I had the pleasure of listening with warmth and gratitude Swami Ji's life in the form of a true story, first hand source, from my grand mother late Smt Tarawati (1902-1984).

She visited us at New Delhi and during the course of her stay with me she described in detail various events about Swami Ji. I owe a deep lifelong debt of gratitude for the great spiritual benefits and upadesha that I have derived from her company. My grand mother possessed a beauty in feature and colour, which was quite unique and ethereal. She was married at the age of 12 years to our grand father late Pandit Nath Ram Ji (1894-1926).

Deep admiration further rose up in me, when I listened to the folktales, from my respected father Pandit Swarup Nath Ji Raina (1919) and his sister Smt. Goveri (Mohan Rani) Kuchroo (1924). These not only inspired an intellectual elite and spiritual luminaries, but also captured the imagination of the common people. Later I tried to acquire as much useful information as possible from various people who were at times close to Swami Ji who enlightened me about the spiritual path of Swami Ji.

I made my own various short notes on the basis of conversation mostly held in Kashmiri with them. It is through their hearty and devoted co-operation that this write up has been at last satisfactorily concluded. Whatever I have gathered about Swami Ji from my grand mother, parents, relatives and those who had good fortune to be in contact some time with him, besides my own personal experiences of last 40 years, I take this liberty to share the same with you.

Swami Haldhar Ji Maharaj's guru I have told was Late Pandit Raja Ji, a saint of high order, his own brother-in-law. It is said that a seeker of God is doubly born. First he gets his birth from his parents and then the second birth from his guru who puts him on the righteous path. He met his real guru at a very young age and took up his apprenticeship under this great yogi, who lived in the foothills of the Himalayas at village called as Dayal, Anantnag and raised Swami Ji.

For many years he remained attached with Pandit Raja Ji. Born and brought up in this atmosphere of learning, and true to his family tradition, became very learned in religious and secular fields. Swami Haldhar Ji took leave from his guru and started wandering in further pursuit of knowledge Divine and to intensify his meditative practices. It appeared that various villages in Kashmir exerted on him a strange fascination. He avoided the din and bustle of city life.

In the year 1908, Swami Ji with his followers happened to come to village Budhmulla (Narvav) situated under the foothill of Ma-Sharika Koh, about 10 kilometres from Baramulla town. As he reached the foothill of Ma-Sharika Koh, new and sublime scenes of the majesty of nature unfolded themselves before his eyes and he was thrilled with joy at the enchanting vision. He was attracted by the cool and bracing breeze of Ma- Sharika Koh.

There he rested adjacent to a pond in the compound of a small wooden structure known popularly those days as (gaundmandal) that belonged to our great grand father, late Pandit Telakchand Ji Pandita (1854-1903). My great grandfather originally a resident of Habba Kadal Srinagar had settled down at Budhmulla village after his marriage to my great grandmother Smt. Shreewded (1862-1923). It is said with this, he also adopted the surname Razdan as my great grand mother's family was known then, but later that surname was also changed to Raina.

Swami Ji after examining the surroundings and the scenic beauty filled with dense forests of pine and cedar trees, chirping birds and blossoming flowers of Ma-Sharika Koh, Budhmulla village presented an enthralling sight of supreme beauty and grandeur to him and his followers.

Swami Ji showed his intent to stay at this place. Initially my great grand mother showed her reluctance in offering him a place to reside. She expressed her inability, being a widow, to serve and feed Swami Ji and his followers, more so due to the fact that she was also very poor and had difficulty even in feeding her own eight children (5 sons & 3 daughters). To which, it is said, Swami Ji offered himself as another child of the family and settled down without waiting for her reply. My grand father Late Pandit Nath Ram was hardly 14 years of age at the time when Swami Ji blessed the family with his presence.

It is said that Swami Ji was of a highly emotional temperament. He felt the urge to instantaneously help our ancestors. Like a compassionate father he helped the young ones to grow. Swami Ji, unlike any other Kashmiri saint, since then maintained his identity in preferring to stay indoors and remain a member of the household though leading a godly/celibate life. All

family members in the house got attached to him and were constantly in attendance on him and looked after him with great care and love.

To Swami Ji every living creature was divine. The young children had great attraction for him and especially my grand father was his favourite. They would play, laugh and dance with him. Swami Ji's deep sincerity, irresistible sweetness and moving sympathy often used to express themselves in tears and his meditations on the Divine led him into a state of God-intoxication. Swami Ji was very courteous and polite to the meanest; he worshipped man as God incarnate. Late Smt Shreewded also sought his society and felt very happy in his presence. Altogether our house which Swami Ji blessed was filled with inexpressible love and joy.

Swami Ji did not choose to live in seclusion or in ashrams nor did he look different from household members in respect of dress or food habits. He wore a long simple toga - loose outer gown (pheran) made of pashmina reaching below the knees with long sleeves, covering his body with a woollen shawl and old-fashioned turban. He had wooden sandal (kharaavoon) to cover his feet.

He would carry a small kangdi (portable fire pot having an earthen bowl-like vessel having hot charcoal inside, fitted into basket made of willow with a handle of the same material). He did not smoke nor took to chillum or charas (an extract of Ganja), but was fully absorbed in God-consciousness throughout. He lived a simple life devoid of pomp and show. He was charitable to all and illuminated the path of spirituality for the seekers he blessed. In marked contrast to his inward greatness, he behaved outwardly like an ordinary man.

There was in him the spontaneous serenity and joy of a natural man, which sometimes burst out into peals of laughter at the sight of others - a laughter, which touched the innermost core of their hearts making them feel that the Swami Ji knew everything of them. Swami Ji did not see marriage as an obstacle to the attainment of spirituality in spite of the fact that he himself had remained brahmacharin. His Vedanta does not ask you to give up your wife or children or other relations, or go to forest or to strip of all the clothes or to walk bare-footed or bareheaded. He believed that man's prime task was, in discharging household duties in truest sense. He believed the greatest ashram was his own home.

Swami Ji's life was marked by sustained and intense spiritual efforts aimed at the upliftment of the ailing mankind. He cured both physical and mental wounds of his disciples instantly, and helped to raise the economy of the down trodden and brought the wrong on the right path. He talked little and preached a little but he was full of compassion and love for all that sought his protection and blessings. He felt he had no right to preach to any one. The only right, he believed, anybody has is to serve.

Swami Ji never performed miracles to impress anyone, although our family members have witnessed many such spiritual chamatkars. None of the devotees and persons, who supplied the material or narrated their experiences, failed to mention the miracles attributed to the great saint. He indeed helped any person who approached him sincerely and with devotion. He lived an unpretentious and sincere life. They regarded him as a great yogi and saint.

Late Smt. Shreewded's three daughters, pure and glorious souls - veritable goddesses - and five sons tended and fed him with all tenderness and care at their command. Whenever they were with him, he would feel they always carried him with the fragrance of purity, simplicity and innocence. Under the watchful eyes of Swami Haldhar Ji it is said that in due course of time, business started by my grand father at a young age of 16 years. He was married to my to my grand mother when he was 19 years old. The business picked up so fast and well that very soon a new house was built at the foot hill of Ma- Sharika Koh. With his blessings and the grace of the true Guru, all the eight children got married and all their children were further highly

educated. Late Shri Ved Lal Ji my grand father's youngest brother was the first student from district Baramulla, (Varahmulla) who passed his graduation examination.

According to my grand mother, Swami Ji used to tell my grand father to engage in doing worldly jobs, while keeping heart fully devoted to God. Swami Ji used to say God's help accompanies self-help and in the battlefield of this world, continue your struggle of life by having faith in God. He will Himself show the right path. Never forget that you have to do your duty righteously, without caring for the result. Swami Ji advised my grand father to work hard to justify the right. You have to earn your right. What you fully deserve with your own efforts and noble acts, you will achieve your objective without delay. Any unselfish act lays God under Debt. He may not pay you by the hand that He employed in receiving that very time, but possibly through some other hand or person He shall certainly pay you back at some other time. These were the pet lines of Swami Haldhar Ji.

Keeping these noble principles in mind, my grand father established a roaring business at Budhmulla. He acquired thousands of acres of agricultural land, fruit gardens, and several shops spreading over to many neighbouring villages, besides establishing a money-lending business as a banker.

All this was accomplished with in a span of just 12 to 16 years. Business spread to Poonch and other places. High breed horses and cattle were imported from Iran, Russia (Kazakistan) and other places by my grand father. Rice and ghee was exported to Lahore through our agents at Baramulla. My grand father constructed then a new house at Srinagar at Zaindar Mohalla for his sister late Smt Sati Ded; married to late Shri Sudershan Ji Kaul. Our family members used this house whenever they were studying at Srinagar. All through out this period, Swami Ji remained at Budhmulla and due to his blessings the business flourished and expanded and all the children got good education.

Hundreds of high breed horses, cows, sheep and other animals were purchased and looked after by employees engaged for the purpose. Special cattle huts were constructed for their safety and stay. Plenty of curd, cheese, ghee and milk was thus available in the house. The staple food being rice was cultivated in the paddy fields spreading over thousands of acres. Fruit and vegetables were available from our own gardens and fields in plenty.

It is said that once my grand father in his dream became aware of the existence of deity of Lord Nrisingha Avatar buried somewhere in one of our fields. Next day he discussed this matter with Swami Ji and immediately upon his advice, arrangements were made to dig certain places around our fields. To every one's surprise, a huge full size deity of Nrisingha Avatar at village Zandefaran was found. While excavating the deity, one arm got broken. Later various other deities of Lord Shiva's family were also found, at village Fathegard, belonging to the period of Pandavas. My grand father took keen interest and very cautiously all these deities were carried on wooden carts to our place of residence. These deities were then placed near the adjacent garden of our residence.

My grand father wanted to construct now a big temple complex near our place of residence, just under the foothill of Ma Sharika Koh, and install the deities there. However the land chosen for the site of temple, belonged to one Muslim, late Shri Ahmed Sheikh, Numbardar, who declined to sell or hand over the piece of land to my grand father.

At the request of my grand father, Swami Ji also advised him to give this piece of land for construction of the temple complex for the good of the community. Swami Ji also advised my grand father to make full payment of the land or in exchange give him, Mr. Ahmed Sheikh, any other piece of land, which Ahmed Sheikh may like.

Ahmed Sheikh did not agree to sell the land. It is said that within next three days thereafter, Ahmed Sheikh came weeping and wailing and offered the land free of cost to Swami Ji for constructing the temple complex. He told my grand father that during the last three days he had been continuously dreaming of misfortunes in his family and had not taken any food since then. He offered his land for temple and in lieu did not accept any money or land in exchange. He became an ardent disciple of Swami Ji thereafter. All this happened due to blessings of Swami Ji.

A temple was built, and the deities of Lord Nrisingha Avataar and Lord Shiva along with other deities, were installed. Soon the entire village became a place of pilgrimage. Hundreds of devotees started coming to village Budhmulla to see statue of Lord Nrisingha Avataar. It was first such temple in whole of Kashmir having a deity of Lord Nrisingha belonging to Pandavas period.

Maharaja Partap Singh's, who was the ruler of Kashmir, came to know about these ancient deities and wanted to remove them from the temple to be kept under his govt. control of archaeological dept. But upon the intervention of Swami Ji these deities were retained at the temple complex.

During the day, often Swami Ji would sit under a huge mulberry tree, which was within the temple complex. Swami Ji would meditate in isolation and was often seen reciting the sacred word OM. However Swami Ji it is said never went inside the temple. However during the night Swami Ji would sit in meditation on a special platform (aasan) raised for him in the prayer cum assembly hall that was specially constructed in the new building and would get blissfully merged with the Lord.

An evening aarti was however became a regular activity. His followers late Shri Hari Ram Ji of (Lalad Sopore), late Shri Budh Ji Lal, Late Shyam Lal Ji Kachroo (Sopore) and late Shri Narayan Kaul (Baramulla) became his devotees and were always at his side. Late Shri Hari Ram Ji was brother of my grand mother.

Many devotees would come to meet Swami Ji from far off places. People in large number also attended the daily bhajans. He believed in Satsang a society of saints. The devotees would bring fruits, clothes and money and offer the same to Swami Ji. These were immediately redistributed to all the people assembled there and in the village. He never retained any gifts or money with him.

About 7 kms down from village Budhmulla, there is another pilgrimage shrine called "Kani-Maiji" situated on the banks of river Jhelum. Kashmiri Pandits hold the main river of Kashmir Jhelum very sacred, a tributary of the Indus. The river flows right through the entire length of Kashmir and both the banks of it are studded with temples and residences of Kashmiri prior to the mass exodus, which took place in 1989. All my relations were forced to leave their homes and hearths at Kashmir due to reign of terror, butchery and exploitation that were prevailing in Kashmir. Many had migrated from the valley to different parts of the country. The Kashmiri Pandit houses were either burnt and or looted and many shrines were destroyed.

Prior to this pilgrims from all over Kashmir used to visit this shrine on Narayani Ekadashi. It was almost like a ritual that all pilgrims after visiting "Kani-Maiji" shrine would visit Budhmulla village to see the temple complex of Nrisingha Avataar and have Swami Ji's darshan as well. Some of them would stay for the night before proceeding for the next shrine "Kutitirath" at Baramulla.

It is said that thousands of people started visiting our house to have a darshan of Swami Ji after the temple was built. To accommodate more people, additional houses having large halls to accommodate more people were constructed. Swami Ji directed that the new houses be built in

the form of L shape. However there was a problem. The formation of "L" was difficult without obtaining one of the corner pieces of land, which belonged to one Late Pandit Manna Shah.

My grand father offered Pandit Shah the price, but he refused to accept any amount in exchange of the land. When the matter was brought to the attention of Swami Ji, he too advised Pandit Shah but the later was adamant. It is said that a few days' later police arrested Shah on charge of murder. However on the intervention of Swami Ji, he was released from jail next day and Shah came and begged pardon and offered entire land without accepting any money.

Thus new houses with large halls and deevankans were built, where more than 300 persons at a time would be served hot food from the daily Langer arranged for this purpose. The hundreds of devotees assembled were served food on the floor itself in three or four long rows. They would be served food in earthen plates (tubchi-bowl). Some time later metal plates (Sartal Thallies) replaced these tubchi plates. Some of the devotees would carry prashaad to their homes in a small earthen pot called as (tok). During winter months, kangdis were kept ready for the devotees. A special hall with heating arrangement through use of several fire pots called (Bhukari wott) was also added for the comfort of the devotees.

The whole complex was now named "Haldhar Kutir" as a mark of respect and regard for Swami Ji. After the new complex was ready, Swami Ji attended the Bhajan sessions in the big prayer hall specially designed on the second floor for this purpose meant for summer period. A special aasan was made for Swami Ji where he would meet his devotees and followers. Every day aarti was a regular activity, followed by devotional songs and music. All devotees were then offered rice and milk pudding (khir).

It was an unusual experience that no matter how many pilgrims/ devotees would come to meet Swami Ji, there would be hot food ready for them. At times Swami Ji would tell Bhainjigree, (1887-1956) my grand father's eldest sister, who was directly responsible to look after Swami Ji needs, and would in turn inform my grand mother Smt. Tarawati., as she was in charge of kitchen, to keep food ready for the persons about to land there.

Many a times it so happened that the food prepared was meant for 40 to 50 guests only, but according to my grand mother she never felt at any time shortage of cooked rice or vegetables, even when more people arrived and stayed back for their meals. Every one used to share rice, dal-pulse, potato and sag as prashaad, which was prepared under the direct supervision of my grand mother. Bhainjigree used to organise Kashmiri sugar tea (kahwa) in the special tea pot (Samawar) for Swami Ji and where as my grand mother would prepare tea for the village folk and guests who stayed for 2 to 3 hours in the company of Swami Ji. All the devotees would usually plead for small favours and mercies. All of them held Swami Ji in high esteem. Swami Ji himself used to have kahwa tea many times a day. He was served specially in a cup called as (Kenzi Khoss).

The flourishing business of my great grandfather resulted in a lot of animosity and enmity. It is said that once some persons entered my grand father's place of business and wanted to burn the office records, pertaining to family's money-lending - banking business. But no records got burnt as these records were under the (asana), seat of Swami Ji, although major portion of the house was completely gutted by the fire. Enemies tried to set on fire our houses many times later but on all these occasions with the grace of Swami Ji presence all the records and family members were safe.

Swami Ji had occult powers, which he would rarely manifest. A vivid experience was seen when he desired to visit his guru Pandit Raja Ji, who had earlier initiated him to spiritualism. One day he informed my grand father that his Guru had come to Baramulla for a few days and desired to meet him. Immediately arrangements were made and he was taken to Baramulla. It is said that

when Swami Ji was about ½ kilometre away from the place of Raja Ji, his guru sensed the coming of Swami Ji and suddenly he directed his followers to close the door of the house.

Soon thereafter Swami Ji arrived with his followers and found the door closed. He knocked at the door but to his surprise, Raja Ji wanted to know what type of a person had come to see him. Was he (kath sadh), a Preacher, (bat sadh) Food Grabber or (wath sadh) Seeker of Truth? Swami Ji replied that he was a wath sadh treading the path of Righteousness and Truth. On hearing his reply the guru immediately opened the door and Swami Ji was allowed to enter into the house. He stayed there silently at the feet of his guru for an hour without uttering a single word and returned back to his place at Budhmulla along with his followers.

Swami Ji would mainly absorbed in the Self - most of the time, although he could easily be approached and asked questions. Swami Ji would quote lines from the mystical utterances of several celebrated Kashmiri saint-poets, including (Lalleshwari) Lal-Ded. He had a great yearning for the Bhagawad Gita, Ramayana, Vedas, Upanishads and Puranas. When in ecstasy, tears would roll down his eyes.

He would often tell the story of Gobardhan Lila of Lord Krishna, Buddha, Shankaracharya, Vivekananda, and Tulsī Dass. On these occasions the devotees would get spell bound, fully enraptured with the wonderful harmony and would not leave the prayer hall. Many Sadhus and Brahmins leading religious life would come from far off places to listen these stories. Swami Ji loved the verses of the saint poetess Lal Ded and would recite many stories about the lives of various saints of Kashmir. He would interpret vaakhs of Lal Ded in his own unique way. He was of view that Lal-Ded presented a true spiritual figure, as an apostle of universal love.

In 1918, Swami Ji visited visit Hardiwar, Varanasi and other holy shrines in UP. Prior to leaving for Hardiwar, my grand mother requested Swami Ji to bless her with a son, since her first child was a daughter. When he came back from the pilgrimage, he handed over prasād to my grand mother and informed her that she would be blessed with a son whom he got from Yamuna. In due course of time a son, my father Pandit Swarup Nath Ji was born in 1919. Swami Ji himself gave this name to my father.

Swami Ji was fond of devotional songs and music. Kirtans and bhajan mandalis were daily held in the prayer hall. He believed that when heart is filled with divine light, sweet and melodious tunes are sure to come out. Swami Ji would some time recite a new leela in Kashmiri and there were many followers / devotees who would write whatever Swami Ji would speak. It used to be composed later in its right tune and voice. They used to sing the Sanskrit slokas and mantras in dhun (chorus).

It is said late Shri Narayan Ji Kaul of Baramulla was given the responsibility of taking notes of Swami Ji's teachings. Unfortunately all these notebooks got destroyed during 1947 war. A few verses that my father copied during his student days in 1935 from one of the notebooks written by Late Narayan Kaul give us an insight into the high spiritual state of Swami Ji. This leela is dedicated to Lord Shiva "BHOW SAR TAR DIM GOURI SHANKER".

Swami Ji was basically a free thinker and was guided by direct experience and inner wisdom, Swami Ji never taught any particular religious doctrine. His concept of prayer was also unique. He did not worship inside any temple or before any statue. He did not put sandal paste mark (tilak) on his forehead even. This mark is usually prominent on that of a Kashmiri Pandit. In fact this mark between the eyebrows on the face of a Muslim and Pandit is the main distinction. But he never put this tilak on his forehead.

Swami Ji used to say and I quote: "All pooja, aarti or namaz are good for nothing, if they give out the slightest odour of selfishness. If the prayer is not all absorbing and unselfish, all this standing, sitting or bowing is futile and empty. He believed in making the inner senses (the

Antah Karan, mind, heart, intellect and ego) pure, by sincerely remembering Him all the time through Satsang, Kirtans and bhajans.

He believed in the law of karma. Swami Ji once answered to this question of karma and I quote:

“Considering all the misery of samsara and the lower realms, my devotion and perseverance do not seem great. Thoughtful people who accept the great law of cause and effect are capable of such perseverance. Those who do not believe in the Dharma have little understanding and are incapable of abandoning the Five Worldly Reactions (Kam, Krodh, Lobh, Moh, and Ahamkar). Every human being is endowed with an intellect (buddhi) which represents in some way his archetypal essence. When buddhi falls into an environment subject to conditions of namarupa (name and form), it produces ahamkara (self-consciousness, source of the individuality).”

My grand mother would narrate in Kashmiri a few sayings of Swami Ji and I quote:

**HANG MUNG TANG OWNNUS AHAMKARAN,
NANG KURNUS SANGDOSH SAMARAN,
RANG RANG BRAHMKIN HAVENUM ARSAAR,
KAM, KRODH, LOBH, MOH BEYE AHAMKARAN,
AINI GHATI LOGNUS CHAMBUN TA CHARAN,
GHATI MUZ GHASH HAWTUM WHYN SATGUR.**

“That is why it is important to believe in the law of karma. When one has continually shown signs of disbelief, even in the obvious aspects of karma, it is far more difficult to understand and believe in the emptiness of things, regardless of ample explanations and rational considerations. The foundation of all Dharma practice lies in belief in the law of karma, and therefore it is very important for you to devote yourself wholeheartedly to the elimination of harmful deeds and to the practice of virtue”.

“First, a vivid state of mental tranquillity and a sustaining energy with a discerning intellect are indispensable requirements for attaining perfect insight. They are like the first steps of a staircase.

Second, all meditation, with or without form, must begin from deeply aroused compassion and love. Whatever one does must emerge from a loving attitude for the benefit of others.

Third, through perfect seeing, all discrimination is dissolved into a non-conceptual state.

Finally, with an awareness of the void, one sincerely dedicates the results for the benefit of others.

“This body, made of flesh and blood along with mental consciousness, is gathered together by twelve chains of cause and effect - one of which is volition - originating from ignorance. The body is the blessed vessel for those fortunate beings that wish for freedom, but it also leads sinners into the lower realms.

Furthermore, a fortunate human existence is a state difficult to acquire. By arousing the mind with great intensity regarding impermanence and death, the consequences of action, and the pain of samsara, one develops a longing for liberation and must pursue it through the observance of moral precepts. Such is the foundation upon which one must build”.

My grand mother used to say that Bhainjigree was a true devotee of Swami Ji. She was devoting her time wholly to the service of Swami Ji. She had in fact by then taken a role of Sadhvi. She was attending to the entire daily needs of Swami Ji. Some time, before Swami Ji's Mahasamadhi, she desired to take Guru-Dhiksha and become his shishya but Swami Ji refused by advising her that this was not meant for her.

He said that so long as she believed in the reality of sense objects, and so long she set her heart on them, she would never get them. They will never give you any real comfort. Possibly that day Swami Ji told Bhainjigree that a misfortune would fall on our family, and we would lose every thing resulting in poverty, misery and they would all leave this village. Nothing but memory shall remain.

It is said that one of his devotees Pandit Sonna Bhan suddenly fell sick. People approached Swami Ji to help him to recover from his sickness. Instead Swami Ji covered himself with a woollen blanket and slept. Many people tried to wake him up but there was no response from him. By then Sonna Bhan had breathed his last. Immediately Swami Ji got up. When asked why he did not help Sonna Bhan, he simply said "Truly He gives and He takes away. His will is supreme and He means always well."

It is said that Swami Ji knew about his last day of journey to Vaikunt. The disciples who were with him for the last days narrated later about the preparations that he had made for Mahasamadhi, although none imagined it to be so at the time. One day Swami Ji jokingly requested my grand father to arrange a fine palanquin (palki a wooden couch with sides covered by cloth curtains) as he had never sat in palki nor taken a ride earlier.

Accordingly many carpenters were engaged and a beautiful heavily garlanded palki was made for him. Once it was ready he directed my grand father to arrange some persons who could carry him to Baramulla, as he wanted to go there for a few days. Accordingly some persons were selected and Swami Ji was carried in palki to Baramulla. When he arrived at Mata Sheila Devi's mandir at Baramulla situated on the banks of river Jhelum, many devotees came to see him there. From here he desired that a "doonga" (a wooden boat having one or two cabins) be arranged for him, as he wanted to go Sopore and travel along side river Jhelum.

My grand father immediately arranged a doonga. The doonga carrying Swami Ji was followed by many small boats (shikaras - kistis), meant for his devotees in a big procession. When he arrived at Sopore, he directed the doonga towards Rishipeer temple, situated on the banks of river Jhelum, where he wanted to take some rest under a huge chinar tree. Incidentally Swami Ji's ancestral house was just hardly 2000 yards away from this place (Rishipeer). All the members accompanying Swami Ji stayed in the temple compound with him, under the chinar tree, (bonishehjar), where he performed his last meditation.

Here Swami Ji called for a Hakim, known to him, who had great love for him. The followers accompanying him thought that possibly due to long journey he was tired and was not feeling well. He had slight fever. Accordingly Hakim paid his visit and examined Swami Ji and prescribed some medicines. Swami Ji directed one of his followers to pay the Hakim eight annas. The Hakim promised to re-examine Swami Ji again the next day.

Swami Ji would not have the treatment. The followers were persistent to have him take some medicine. Once again Hakim came to see Swami Ji next day, and informed his followers that Swami Ji was much better after the treatment. Followers were surprised to hear him say so. Swami Ji would only laugh and again directed one of his followers to pay the Hakim eight annas. When Hakim left the place, Swami Ji felt relaxed and informed his followers that he had to pay one rupee to Hakim and now he felt better and at the same time fever vanished.

Soon thereafter Swami Ji advised his followers to spread kusa grass (darbha) on the ground and directed them to wake him up next morning just before the sunrise. He slept on the darbha grass all through out the night, where as followers recited bhajans and other verses dear to Swami Ji.

Early in the morning on the day of Ramnavmi, Swami Ji woke up, before sunrise. He took bath on the banks of river Jhelum, and went back to the place where the darbha grass was spread.

Prior to the day of his attaining Mahasamadhi, he told his follower to wash the place and spread the darbha and wash the place with cow excrement (ghober).

He asked for a cup of tea and after taking the tea, sat on scattered darbha (kusa grass) in his usual yogic posture and in this he mingled with the infinite and attained the abode no sooner the first ray of sun touched the ground. The priest of the temple recited sacred and efficacious verses from the Bhagavad-Gita and Ramayana. So in this atmosphere consecrated by vibrations of sacred texts, he shed his mortal frame in 1921 on the day of Ramnavmi.

His achievement in sadhana was supreme. He had attained complete union with God. My grand father and all present made a sacred circumambulation, (pradaksina) around Swami Ji's, while incense and camphor were burnt. Samadhi postured body was then taken in a heavily garlanded palki, around Sopore, where thousands joined the procession set out through the narrow lanes. Vedic mantras were recited as disciples performed last rites.

His shawl and wooden paadukaa were collected by my grand father and brought in a procession to Budhmulla. Swami Ji's relics, photograph, shawl, wooden paadukaa and articles of his daily use were kept on a raised aasan for darshan of the people to pay their homage. Regularly Kheer and other eatable were distributed amongst the hundreds of his devotees who used to come to our village on this day till 1947.

At a very young age of 32, my grand father too expired under mysterious circumstances, when he was to take over the charge of Zaidaree. At that time, my father Pandit Swarup Nath Ji Raina was just six years old. My grand father's younger brother late Pandit Shiv Ram (1896-1941) then took over the affairs of family and after the expiry of late Shiv Ram Ji Raina his younger brother Late Pandit Ved Lal Ji Raina became the sole custodian of all our properties.

But it is after Swami Ji's death that more miracles and legends began to gather round his life. Once during the time of Independence partition in 1947, Swami Ji came in the dreams of Bhainjigree, advising her to leave immediately as their lives were in danger and reminded her what he had once told her about the coming misfortunes.

Swami Ji had foreknowledge of what laid ahead. One day Swami Ji had told clearly Bhainjigree that a misfortune would fall on our family, and we would lose every thing resulting in poverty, misery and had said that they would all leave this village. Nothing but memory shall remain. Remembering what swami Ji had said when he was alive, she woke up her youngest brother late Pandit Vedlal Ji Raina (1900-1953) and told him about the dream and also what earlier Swami Ji had prophesied.

All the family members consisting of 17 adults and children, promptly acted and left the village immediately in the dark mid night, carrying very few essential clothing including the Shawl of Swami Ji and his photograph, and left for safer place to Srinagar. No sooner our family members were about 22 kms away from the village than our entire property was looted and all houses were set on fire. Nothing was left for us.

The whole district of Baramulla, which included our village, was an object of plunder and genocide in the month of October 1947. Kashmiri Pandits were terrorised and hounded out of their homes and hearths for no reason except being Hindu. Over night we became refugees, lost every penny. If we had not left the village all of us would have been burnt alive. Many of our neighbours who stayed behind at Budhmulla were murdered, tortured and butchered. Many of our relations at Baramulla were murdered or shot dead.

Maharaja Hari Singh signed the instrument of Accession with Govt of India, on 26th Oct 1947 to save people of Kashmir. Indian Air Force undertook 704 hazardous sorties from October 27th to Nov 17th 1947 to save Kashmir valley from the ravages of the raiders.

I, then a small child still cherish the memory of those beautiful buildings, the temple complex, flower gardens, fruit orchards full of apples- peaches- berries- walnuts, paddy fields, vast green playgrounds surrounding our houses and Ma-Sharika Koh, which Swami Ji had blessed. It was entirely due to Swami Ji's blessings that we reached safe at Srinagar and stayed temporarily at late Shri Sudershan Kaul's house at Zaindar Mohalla, till arrangements were made to shift to another building which was taken on rent at Tankipura Srinagar.

While we were at Srinagar, one of the farmers who was earlier working at our fields at Budhmulla village, met Shri Madhusudan Kaul (my Mossa Ji), who owned a chemist's shop Jai Hind Medical Stores at Baramulla, to buy some medicine for his ailing son. During the conversation he enquired about our family members and quite unknowingly informed him that he took the wooden paadukaa of Swami Ji, when villagers looted and gutted down our houses. He further said since then, he had faced lots of problems and lost one son and the other one was terribly sick.

He did not know what to do with this paadukaa which felt had some spiritual power in it. On hearing this story, Madhusudan Ji advised him to get the wooden paadukaa immediately from his house, as otherwise his second son may also die. The farmer got frightened and rushed to his home and brought the wooden paadukaa and handed over to Madhusudan Ji. In return he was given free medicines till his son fully recovered.

Madhusudan Ji was also a relation of late Narayan Kaul a great follower of Swami Ji. He took the wooden paadukaa to his home that very time and after a proper wash, he performed paadukaa poojan. Later he worshipped the paadukaa daily. He kept this secret from our family members. His business started flourishing since then.

Some how it seems our family after 1947 episode, forgot Swami Ji totally mainly because of bad financial conditions prevailing in the family, since there was no regular income and every one remained busy in solving their day to day problems. Our joint family got separated. Our vast land running in thousands of acres was taken over by Govt. under the land Act of 1952 and we were left with bare minimum piece of land at Budhmulla.

Once the conditions became safe, we returned to Baramulla. Since all our houses were already destroyed and damaged, we settled at Baramulla instead of Budhmulla and my father constructed a new house after a great struggle and encountering many hardships.

My father came to know about the existence of Swami Ji's paadukaa one-day when a terrible fire started very close to Madhusudan Ji's house. The intensity of fire was so high that it was sure that his house too would get destroyed with the furious flames approaching towards his house.

At this stage he brought out the wooden paadukaa of Swami Ji and exhibited towards the leaping flames, with the paadukaa in hand, and requested Swami Ji to help them in saving the house from fire and destruction. It is said that the flames changed the direction immediately and thus Madhusudan Ji's house was completely saved. When this story was known to the public my father requested Madhusudan Ji to return our Swami Ji's paadukaa, but he did not oblige and my father did not insist either.

Swami Ji's other devotees reported many such incidents of fire, and were saved from destruction by bringing out the photograph of Swami Ji, and in some cases due to regular prayers and touching the photograph cured them from diseases and in few cases operations were successful performed. It is said that one-day Late Shri K L Kaul's house (advocate) at Baramulla caught fire. This house was adjoining to our cousin's house son of Late Shri Ved Lal Ji Raina. Late Shri Som Nath Ji Raina exhibited the photograph towards the fire and begged

Swami Ji to save their lives and property. While Shri K L . Kaul's house was completely destroyed, Som Nath Ji's house and his entire family was saved.

Conditions at Kashmir have never been favourable for Kashmiri Pandits since 1947. I left Kashmir in 1960 for further studies. After completion of my studies I decided to settle down at Bombay. Initially I worked at Bombay but later was employed at New Delhi for a number of years. With some of my own savings, started business, under a joint venture with a renowned company in 1978 but unfortunately our joint venture partner closed their operation in 1980 and so did my business. Thereby I suffered heavy losses in my business. I was terribly upset and ran into absolute financial mess.

After collapse of my business, I took up a job at New Delhi. It was during this period, my grand mother visited us at New Delhi, in 1981, when she talked a lot about Swami Ji and described in detailed various events and in the process she enlightened me to a great extent about Swami Ji's spiritual capabilities.

I started praying daily in the mornings at Swami Ji's photograph. In 1984, I left the job and started working as an independent professional consultant. I had to travel a lot in India and abroad. All places without fail I would carry Swami Ji's photograph and pray every morning in front of the photograph. Within a period of two years, my business started picking up. I got a new lease of life. Swami Ji helped me at every stage. The list is endless. In the meanwhile we constructed a huge house. Recently an artist prepared a life size portrait of Swami Ji, based on Swami Ji's original photograph. The mere glance at this portrait of Swami Ji, which adores our living room, makes us feel comfortable and gives us inward peace and illumination.

Many copies of Swami Ji's portrait were distributed to all his devotees and our relations stationed in India and abroad. One such photo was kept in a special pooja room at our new house along with other deities.

In 1993, my daughter Saloni got married. On the day of her marriage and before the arrival of barat, there was a sudden down pour of rain. We had made arrangement for serving food to over 600 guests, under a shamiyana (a kind of canopy). We were all worried as to how to cope up with this unexpected problem, which was threatening to damage all our arrangements.

My mother Late Smt Rupawati Raina (1923- 1999) advised me to bring out Swami Ji's photograph and directed me show the same to rain gods. I followed her instructions. The heavy down pour suddenly changed to a light drizzling and rains totally stopped, at the time of arrival of barat. Thereafter for two hours our place had no rain, where as neighbour hood was flooded with rainwater.

On this occasion we had invited all his relations. Shri Madhusudan Kaul also attended this function and stayed with us for a week or so. Being himself a very religious man, Madhusudan Ji used to pray in front of Swami Ji's photograph. During his stay at our house we discussed quite a lot about Swami Ji. I had no knowledge at that time that he had the wooden paadukaa of Swami Ji.

One day I discussed with him in presence of some of my relations assembled there, about a dream of seeing wooden paadukaa of Swami Ji. He showed interest and wanted to know the type/ shape of paadukaa. I drew the picture on a piece of paper. He told me that the paadukaa are lying at Jammu and narrated the whole story, how he got the paadukaa.

I demanded the return of the paadukaa. He showed his inability to help me since the paadukaa was under the control of his son and where as he was staying at Bombay. He had no objection provided his son Shri Nana Ji Kaul now staying at Jammu was willing to hand over the same to me. I requested my uncle, Shri Mohan Lal Pandita (originally from Sopore) to rush to Jammu

and get the paadukaa from Shri Nana Ji. He visited Jammu but was not successful in getting the paadukaa.

At this stage I requested my mother to visit Jammu and get hold of the paadukaa. She found the paadukaa lying in some kangri (fire pot) unattended. Possibly this must have been the main reason why I dreamt of paadukaa when Shri Madhusudan happened to be at our house. It needed attention, love and care. My mother was successful in getting the paadukaa released from Nana Ji hold. We are all thankful to him.

After a span of 46 years the Swami Ji's paadukaa was finally back with us. It was a happy and triumphant occasion. We made a beautiful casket of wood and silver. After my mother performed pooja, covered it fully with sandoor, and she kept it in the casket and placed the same in the special pooja room constructed in the house. Since then we have been performing daily pooja of Swami Ji's paadukaa.

The more I think now of Swami Ji the more I am convinced that Swami Ji continues to live with us.

I think what I have said is enough to show that I am enthusiastic, to know more about Swami Ji's life from others as well, who may be anxious in paying tributes to his spiritual qualities and attainments. We are expressing adoration and acknowledging our faith in him as the sadguru.

At the close I remember what Saint Kabir has said. "My Guru and the Lord are both standing before me. Whose feet should I touch? I would sacrifice my body, mind and all for my Guru, as it was he who put me on the path leading to Lord."

44.0 INTUITIVE MYSTICISM OF MASTERJI

"He rejected the dross and assimilated the pure"

Professor Kashi Nath Dhar



Pandit Zinda Koul

Mysticism is a continuous exercise in self- realization. It is an incessant mental drill in which the self and the super-self are fully identified. In Kashmir from the hoary times to the present day, this urge of the soul for becoming one with the super-soul has been always emphasized. Monistic Shaivism, as propounded in the 'Shiva Sutras' of Acharya Vasu Gupta, and later interpreted profusely by Abhinava Gupta, is the first mile-stone ;of the human spirit on its pilgrimage to self-consciousness in Kashmir. The Kashmiri version of Persian Sufism has also influenced the Kashmiri thought to a large extent. This veritable quest for self-education and self-discipline is therefore not at all foreign to the mental fiber of a Kashmiri. It is in his blood. Lalleshwari and Nund Rishi (14th Century AD) epitomized this mental trait in their Vakhs and also gave it the most homely and appropriate expression in Kashmiri, pure and simple. Till then either Sanskrit or Persian ruled the day in this field.

This torch of interrogation and consequent self- satisfaction, the hallmark of mysticism, was kept alive by- a host of Kashmiri thinkers like Parmananda, Rupa Bhavani, Gobind Kak, (Vanapoh), Shamas Fakir, Ahmed Rah, Samadmir, Shah Ghafoor and others and its virgin heights were admirably scaled by these stalwarts.

In mysticism two distinct trends are discernible. The first, born of experience, is termed as 'revealed' and the second, attained by intellect, is named 'intuitive'. The goal of both these media is the same; firstly, locating clearly the frontiers between the immanence and transcendence, and finally, fusing these into each other. The acme of such intellectual pursuit is rising above the Finite and getting closer to the Infinite as speedily as possible, thereby

minimizing the distance between the two. In Islamic Sufism also, similarly, two forms of mystic exaltation are noticed, abnormal and supernormal. Ibni Farid calls these respectively as intoxication and sobriety of union. It can therefore, be said safely that intuitive mysticism is a non-stop intellectual process and is more arduous than the revealed for reasons obvious.

In this context of mystic discipline, Masterji has earned by his own right a prominent place in the galaxy of such thinkers who churn their intellect incessantly and groom it to explain the ideal spurning the actual. This should not be treated as self-deceit - fleeing from the life in all its naked realities instead of facing it with courage and patience. Masterji did not forget life around him, he did not abjure life even though it was always bitter to him. He was a civil servant by profession but a Savant by nature. As long as he remained in -government service, he acquitted himself very well with undivided dedication to his profession. He drank at the fountain of life most voraciously. He wore his profession on his sleeves, so to say.

Perhaps, this acute sense of responsibility to his profession ignited the first spark of the mission he had to undertake in future. This formative period in his life ushered in the mental ferment which is so necessary for reaching the mystic plane. It is the moment of self-forgetfulness when the 'actual' with all the teeth is incapable to bite; the soul commences its flight to touch unknown horizons and the body has no meaning at this stage.

Masterji's life was no bed of roses. It had nothing palatable to offer to him, it only enabled him to keep the wolf from his door. He never lived in affluence. The cruel hand of death snatched away his dearest son; he had to fend for his widowed daughter-in-law and her children. He did not succumb under the weight of such calamities. He fought his life's problems in the most detached manner conquering these bit by bit, never losing hope. These came as a blessing in disguise and made a mystic of him, not out of spite for life, but for making it more meaningful.

Masterji was a profound scholar of Persian. He could not escape the influence and impact of great Persian mystics like Shams Tabrez, Maulana Rumi, Hafiz Shirazi and others. He had fully assimilated all that they had to say. The echo of Shams Tabrez's 'Man tu Shudam, tu Man Shudi' can be unmistakably understood from his verses also.

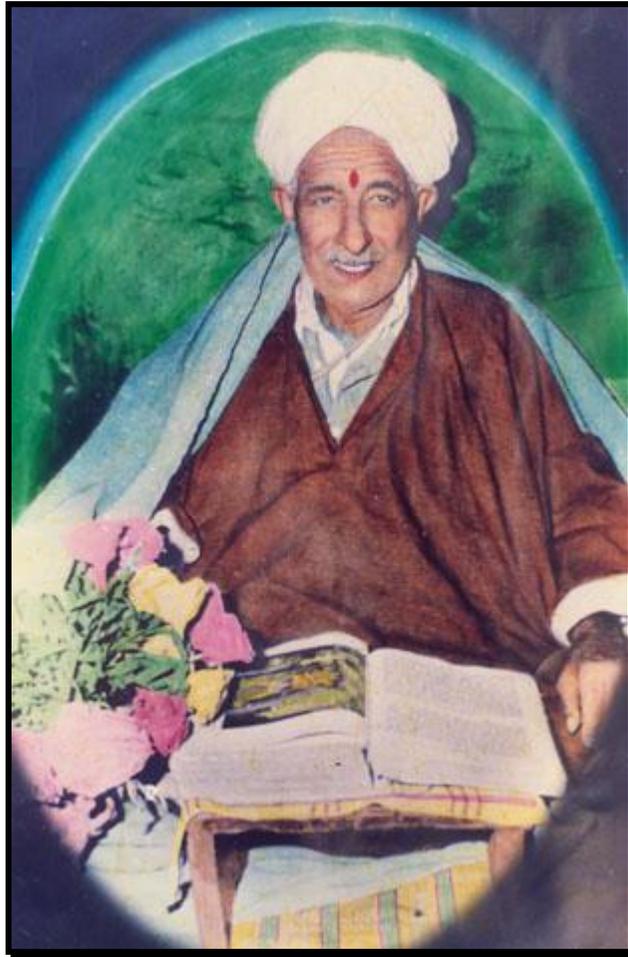
Masterji built his personality brick by brick. The foundation for this was provided. by the Hindu mystic lore especially by the Kashmir Shaivism. Vedanta and the Upanishads also acted as the cementing link to make it more broad-based. Both are portrayed most eloquently in his 'Sumaran'. Masterji's intuitive mysticism is a happy blend of Hindu mystic thought and Islamic Sufism. He toiled hard to attain to that plane of self-consciousness where the material contours melt away before the effulgence of the 'spirit'. A hand-to-mouth living gave him the required tools for rising above it. Erudite scholarship in Persian and Sanskrit opened for him the vistas of mystic exuberance achieved by a host of his predecessors. Self-discipline in the case of the first and self-education in the case of the second, are in themselves a worthy preamble to self-dependence, and this in its turn paves the way to self-consciousness. Masterji's unambiguous attitude to mysticism is of synthesis in which intuition and intellect form the woof and the warp. The didactic content is, therefore, somewhat subdued in his poetry. He does not claim to be a preacher. He only unravels the conclusions that he has arrived at in life. He does not even analyze these but only clothes these in most pulsating words as they ooze forth. The intensity of feelings does not afford him even a breathing time to ruminate on what he has written or expressed. He goes on serializing his heart-beats most candidly. His approach is suggestive and not direct. His innate introspection rejects the dross and only assimilates the pure - the yard-stick for it being his unerring intellect. So 'Sumaran' is a codified version of his feelings and not a treatise on morality or ethics. His poetry is clear and more intelligible than that of Lalla or Nund Rishi, because his discriminating intellect has an edge over their on-rushing experiences by which they feel overwhelmed. Masterji is always sure of the ground under his feet.

Masterji was a conscious artist like Goswami Tulsidas who without mincing words beckons to us in undertones, by implication, to make this life a veritable bridge to the life-beyond. He makes a happy compromise between the self and the super- self, matter and spirit, enjoyment and renunciation, intellect and intuition. He does not leave us guessing. That is, perhaps his most substantial contribution to our unbroken heritage of mysticism.

Source: **Koshur Samachar**

45.0 SWAMI HAR KAK JI

Param Gyani Shri Swami Har Kak ji Maharaj of Bamhama (Kupwara), Kashmir alias Shri Swami Hari Ram ji Dhar was affectionately called as Swami Har Bab ji by the simple masses of Northern Kashmir. Swami ji was born in a village Bamhama in Kupwara district in B. Samat 1960 on Asuj Krishna Pakshi Triyadashi (1903 B.C.) in a common Kashmiri Pandit gharana of Dhar - his father being a farmer who served as an ordinary employee of PWD.



Swami Harkak ji

Swami ji's path of Parmarth started at a very early age of 5-6 years. It so happened that cholera epidemic struck Kashmir and swami ji at this tender early age of 5 years was also affected by the epidemic. Since there was no reliable treatment of the disease at that time, Swami ji was left on God's mercy. One day, swami Shiv ji Putoo of Sopore, a renowned saint of those times and a relative of the family, visited them. Swami ji's father who had lost all the hopes of his recovery requested the saint to whisper some mantras which would provide eternal peace to the poor soul of the dying child. The revered saint whispered some mantra to swami ji and asked him to repeat it without any break and assured him of his recovery. Swami ji did as directed and chanted his mantra throughout the day and night. It so happened that swami ji recovered miraculously. Swami ji continued chanting the same mantra thereafter. After a year or so, swami ji came across the same saint and narrated his progress to him. The saint was surprised and

pleased on hearing his progress in the line at such a young age. He was thereafter adopted properly by the saint as his disciple.

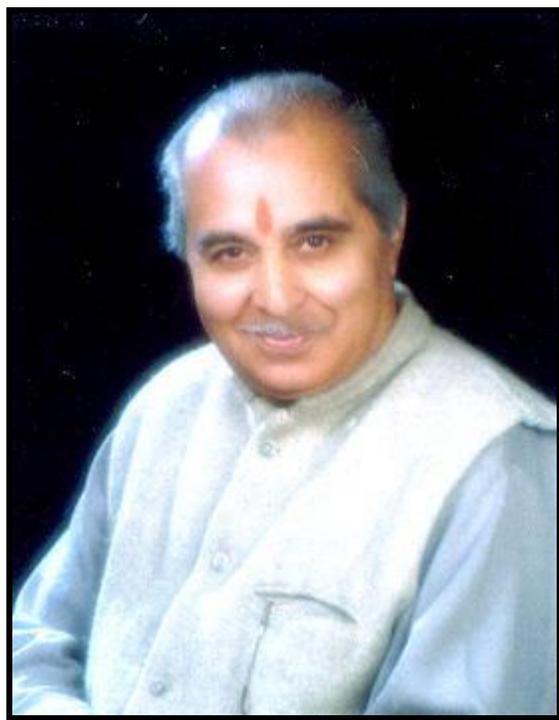
Swami Har Kak ji Maharaj with his intense tapasya attained the grace of Bhagwati Mahamaya and he became poorna yogi at very young age of 18 years, and as per Kashmiriyat heritage he was conferred the title "Illaqadhari" (Illaqadhari was a mutual spiritual bondage of all the saints, rishis, sufis, mastanas, farzanas of Kashmir without any caste, creed or religion).

Swami ji's guru belonged to the Mushkhil Kusha Shree Rashpeer Maharaj heritage. He hailed from Sopore and was a great scholar of Hindu philosophy, especially Shaivism. Swami Har Bab ji Maharaj remained out of limelight in the early period of his life, but as per the wishes of Jagatshree Mahamaya the great saint of Kashmir Mastana Shri Kash Kak ji Maharaj of Manigam started to direct the needy people to him so much so that in the year 1960-61 Shri Kash Kak ji Maharaj sent a message to Swami ji to his house at Manigam on Magh Shukala Chutra Dashi. Kash Kak ji Maharaj was ill due to paralytic stroke. How Shri Har Bab ji reached Manigam when it was snowing heavily in the whole valley continuously for three days was a miracle in itself. Anyway Shri Kash Kak ji Maharaj handed over his charge of Illaqadhari to Shri Har Kak ji Maharaj. Soon after Shri Kash Kak ji Maharaj attained nirvana.

Swami Har Kak ji's teachings were so simple in Kashmiri language that his art of narration would leave the audiences spell bound for hours together without any break. We have been in his Satsang for nights together. It used to be so sweet and convincing that even a hard-core atheist got moulded. He has satsang of great saints like Swami Nand Lal ji, Swami Sadmolu, Swami Aftaab, Ram ji, Baba ji of Chandigam, Swami Agast Muni of Gofbal, Swami Shri Dayal Gobind Koul of Vanpoh, Shree Aima Sahib Yaaru, Shri Qadir Sahib of Hiri, Kupwara and other spirituals of Kashmir.

Swami Har Kak ji Maharaj attained Nirvana on 4th April, 1975 (Chaitra Krishna Paksha Saptami, 2032). He was a grehasti saint and did not approve an ashram in his name and considered his house at Bamhama as an ashram for all his disciples. His jayanti and yagnaya were previously performed at Bamhama and now in Jammu an Asthapan in his name has come up at Priya Darshani Lane No. 3, Talab Tillo, Jammu. For any details, refer to Shri Madhu Sudan Pandit, House No. 309, Hazuri Bagh, Talab Tillo, Jammu, J&K State, India (Phone: 0191-2553853).
Courtesy: Sudhir Rangroo

46.0 POSHKAR NATH KAUL (POSH BUB)



Sh. POSHKAR NATH KAUL
(Popularly known as "POSH BUB")

Born at and Date of Birth:

On 'Kartik Dwadashi (Shuklapaksha)', 1937 at Shehliteng, Habba Kadal, Srinagar.

Guru:

HH. Pt. TIKALAL JI MAHARAJ of Achan Badgam

Inspiration by:

Maternal uncles who were Bachelors & Saints of the time namely Sh. Rugh Nath Raina (Rugh Kak), Sh Narayan Ju Raina (Naran Kak), Sh. Radha Krishen Raina (Lala Ji), studied Baagwat & Shakth from these Saints in childhood.

Activities:

Delivered lectures and participated in discourses in 'Satsangs' (devotional assemblies) alongwith known saints particularly Lt. Swami Kashkak Jee, Sw. Sarwanand Ji, Sw. Nandlal Ji of Gushi, Sw. Nandlal Ji of Nunar, Bhagwan Gopi Nath Ji of Srinagar, Sw. Mathura Devi of Verinag, Sw. Lakshman Joo of Ishber, Sw. Amritanand of Tullamula, Sw. Neel Kanth of Kanikadal popularly known as Neele Bub, etc.

Association with:

Kirtan Mandalies of Hari Parbat, Pokhribal and other Mandlies in the valley.

Compositions:

Composed devotional "leelas" in Kashmiri, Published an anthology "POSH DAEL" (comprising leelas attributed to "Maharagnya bhagwati"), "SANKSHIPTA RAMAYANA" (Ramayana in brief), some annotations on "DURGA SAPTASHATI"

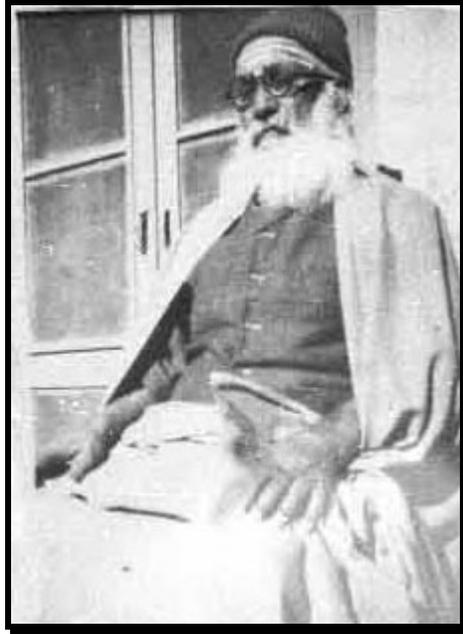
Ashram's Temple:

Started an Ashram at Gouri Shankar (Kani Kadal), then migrated to Jammu & Delhi. The Ashrams are running with various activities including Mahayagnas. The ashrams are engaged in various activities of public service like helping widows and destitutes monetarily, granting aid to poor boys and girls to enable them continue their studies etc. etc. Presently the thrust of the main ashram at Chinore, Jammu, is on the spiritual uplift of people at large by regular discourses by Swami Posh bub. Besides lectures and discussions on the Holi Gita, Kirtans and Bhajans are a regular feature. The ashram is thronged by people, curious to learn about various facets of Dharma. Swamijee got a temple (consecrated to "Goddess Durga") at Chinore.

Picture and write-up provided by:

Mandakini Koul - tanuchinky@yahoo.co.in

47.0 SWAMI NILKANTH JI



Swami Nilkanth ji

Swami Nilkanth Ji's brother was Ramchand Janda, known in the vicinity of Drabiyar popularly as Ramajanda. He was a shopkeeper selling all sorts of goods besides healing people from various ailments. His eye drops were a guarded secret. Over the age of 90, he wore a white T-shirt and Khaki shorts and then you would see him riding his bicycle through the summer breeze of Srinagar. He would remand if some one just took only a little finger towards ones mouth, because it was not proper and he would always remind one with authority that it was not a good sign to get a belly. He himself was slim and tall and reached 100 years.

Courtesy: **Mag. Kapil Kaul**

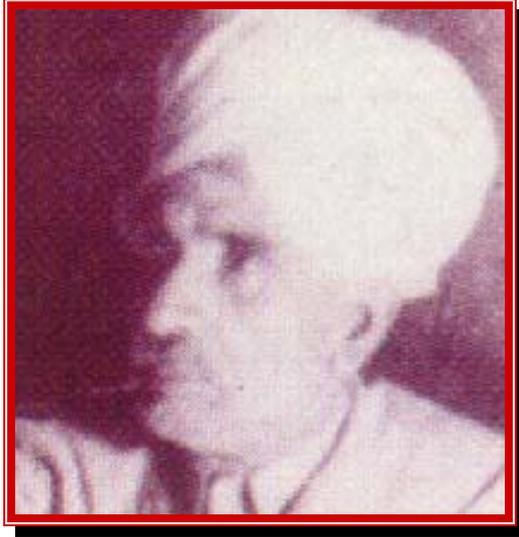
48.0 SWAMI SHYAM LAL JI



Swami Shyam Lal ji

Pictures Courtesy: Lalit Wanchoo

49.0 SWAMI NEELKANTH SHARMA JI



Swami Neelkanth Sharma ji

Source: Koshur Samachar

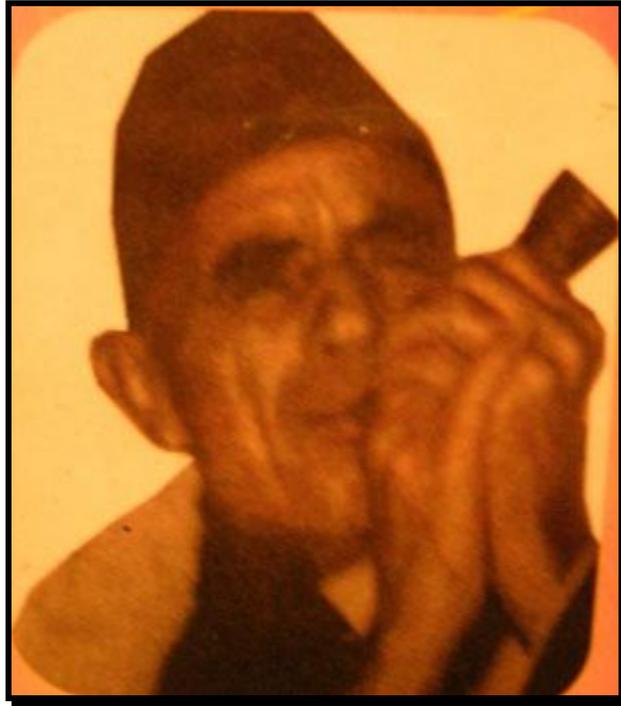
50.0 SHARIKA JI



Sharika ji

Source: **Koshur Samachar**

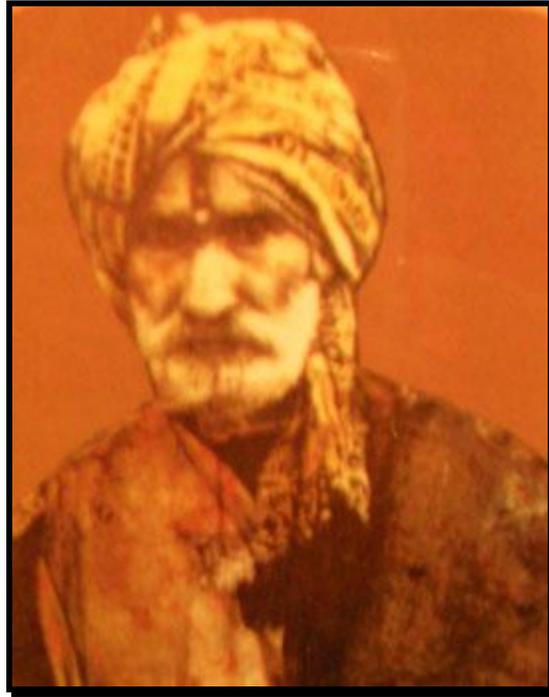
51.0 SWAMI KRAL BAB



Swami Kral Bab

Picture Courtesy: Anjali Kaul, Austin

52.0 SWAMI MAN KAK



Swami Man Kak
Picture Courtesy: Anjali Kaul, Austin

53.0 SWAMI SIDH BAB



Swami Sidh Bab
Picture Courtesy: Anjali Kaul, Austin