

# Evolution of Kashmiriyat (A Case of Socio-Cultural Assimilation During 14th-15th Century)



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## Abstract

Kashmiriyat means the uniqueness of Kashmiries in social, religious and cultural aspects. Their centuries-old traditions, spirit of respect for one another and their festivals, rituals, traditions, religiosity, morality and beliefs. The word Kashmiriyat has always been used to determine the peace and tolerance whenever Kashmir has witnessed social, political and religious tensions. Kashmiriyat is shaped during 14<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> century by the teachings of famous Shaviate Saint Lal Ded, Sufi Saint Sheikh Noor-ud-Din Noorani and under the leadership of Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin and Akbar the great. Since 1980s the Kashmiriyat has been dropping its identity or essence due to unfortunate reasons. Kashmir became a battleground of competing ideologies about Kashmiriyat for Indian nationalists and separatists. In this write up our attempt is to explore that spirit of Kashmiriyat which has lost somewhere in the violent atmosphere. It is mandatory to explore the real prospects of Kashmiriyat under historical evidences, what it was, what it stands and what it ought to be.

**Keywords:** Ethno-Religious Structure, Sufi-Rishi Movement, Cultural Assimilation, Kashmiriyat.

## Introduction

Kashmiriyat as a word itself suggests its meaning and is used to denote the spirit of Kashmiri-ness. The word Kashmiriyat signifies a centuries-old indigenous secularism of Kashmir, characterized by religious and cultural harmony, brotherhood, patriotism, and pride for mountainous homeland of Kashmir by the Kashmiris. Kashmiriyat is a common word in Kashmir which is often used to determine the tolerance; that major community used to display towards minor community both in religious and cultural aspects. The tolerant nature of Kashmiri people, their culture and centuries-old traditions, their manners of living together in a harmonious relationship by accepting and respecting each other's values gave birth to Kashmiriyat. In this write-up we are trying to explore the concept of Kashmiriyat, its prospects and facts behind the spirit which has been bond the people of Kashmir in cultural unity from centuries till date.

According to requirement of plot we have divided this article into four parts. In section I we shall throw light on Historical account of Kashmir and in the same section we shall also discuss the ethno-religious structure of Kashmiri population. In section II we shall throw light on the concept of Kashmiriyat, what it actually was? How it was founded and the contribution of its founders, Sheikh Noor-ud-Din Wali along with Lal Ded, through Sufi-Rishi movement.

In section III we shall discuss the political aid to Kashmiriyat by Zain-ul-Abidin for the glorification of its spirit. Finally in section IV we shall analyze critically the downfall of Kashmiriyat or fading face of kashmiriyat.

## Aim of the Study

At present Kashmir is passing through turmoil due to many unfortunate reasons and intolerance. The hatred mistrust and communal enmity has brought a bad name to Kashmir. In such a horrible situation the study on Kashmiriyat is significant which may present a useful enquiry in establishing the lost serenity and peace in Kashmir and the work is also an attempt to restore and regain the equality and universal brotherhood in Kashmir. The main objectives of the study are as following:

1. To highlight the composite culture of Kashmir.
2. To create admiration among people for humanity, fraternity and universal brotherhood.
3. To explore what Kashmiriyat is in real essence.

**Historical account of Kashmir****Nomenclature of Kashmir**

Kashmir is an ancient principality which is mentioned in Puranas. The Vishnudharmottar Purana refers Kashmir as Vaitastika, the land of the river Vitasta<sup>1</sup> (ancient name of river Jhelum). The Mahabharata and the Buddhist literature refer to it as Kashmira mandala. For Greeks it was Kashpera. Hieun-Tsang (7<sup>th</sup> century A.D.) called it as Kia-shis-mi-lo. The ancient Kashmiris themselves called their country as Kashmira which latter shortened to Kashmir.

The history of Kashmir is very ancient; according to Nilamata Purana Kashmir verily occupies a premier place in the world. The oldest extant text on Kashmir, 'Nilamata Purana' (the only book consulted by Kalahana, author of the remarkable 'Rajatarangni' a regional history of Kashmir in Sanskrit) "Kashmir is linked to Kashmira, one of the names of the Goddess Uma, Shiva's consort, Kashmir was originally heart-capturing lake, latter became a beautiful land, after the water had been drained-off by saint named Kashyapa. There is a famous narrative behind the origin of Kashmir that the lake had been the abode of a demon 'jalabhava'<sup>2</sup> a dragon who was invincible under water. The dragon was killed and saint encouraged people from adjacent areas to settle-down in the valley. Rajatarangni of Kalahana is an authentic history of Kashmir written in 12<sup>th</sup> century A.D, which covers the accurate history and polity as well as social, religious, cultural and geographical aspects of Kashmir from 12<sup>th</sup> century B.C to 12<sup>th</sup> century A.D. Kalhana has started the history of Kashmir just before the great Mahabharata war, and the first king mentioned by him is Gonanda I. King Ashoka the great is clearly referred by Kalhana in Rajatarangni. "The great grandson of Sakuni and the son of that king's grand-uncle named Ashoka, who was first true to his engagements and then supported the earth. That king, who had extinguished sin and had accepted the teachings of Buddha, covered Suskaetra and Vitastatra with numerous stupas."<sup>3</sup> Kalhana's account of Turushka kings indicates without any doubt the Kushan occupation of the valley. The three Kings mentioned by him are Huska, Juska and Kanishka, each of them is credited with the foundation of a town, after their names: Hushkapura, Jushkapura and Kanishkapura. The Kushan kings built many temples and viharas. It is well known fact that Kanishka held the third Buddhist council at 'Kundalvan' (Harwa, near Shalimar garden). It was during the time of first king of Karakota Dynasty, Durlabvardhan that the Chinese pilgrim, Hiun-Tsang visited Kashmir and entered the valley via Varahmulla where he found a huge stone gate, on which it was written according to him, "The entry of all outsiders, except the Hindus was banned in the valley. He stayed in Kashmir for nearly two years, studied Sanskrit and Hindu scriptures at the feet's of learned men here"<sup>4</sup>. But the statement of Huien-Tsang does not stand sound in context of Kashmir because "Anangalekha" the queen of king Durlabhavardana, built a Buddhist vihara which she named as Anangabhavana vihara. The king himself accorded a

royal reception to Huien-Tsang on his visit to the valley and provided him with all the facilities required by him"<sup>5</sup> Buddhist writers always tried to show, Hinduism as a persecutor of Buddhism, e.g. in ancient Indian history Sunga dynasty is blamed for persecuting Buddhism, but the facts revealed that Sunga dynasty not only revived Brahmanism, but also built Barhut stupa, Sanchi Stupa and other railings also. In Kashmir Buddhism flourished during Ashoka, it is well known fact that fourth Buddhist council was organized in Kashmir. So, the statement of Hieun Tsang is contradictory. Kashmir was the place where every one was allowed to enter, if it was not then how Buddhism and Islam flourished in Kashmir.

In Karkota Dynasty Lalitaditya Muktapid (724-761) A.D. is called the Samudargupta of Kashmir. He was the greatest ruler of Kashmir throughout ancient times. In medieval period (Bhudh shah) Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin is called Akbar of Kashmir. From very ancient times Kashmir has been a history of producing intellectuals of all sorts. Kashmir the land for which, Mughal Emperor Jahangir said, "If indeed there be paradise on the earth, it is this, it is this, it is this". Now we shall move on the ethno religious structure of Kashmir which is given below in the next paragraph.

**Ethno-Religious Structure of Kashmir**

The region has historically been an important centre for Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam and Sikhism. Kashmir has a significant place in the mythology and history of all the four religions. The region derives its name from the Kashmiri Pandit ancestor named Rishi Kashyapa. The region is home to many legendary Hindu and Buddhist monuments and institutions. For Muslims Hazratbal shrine houses a relic that is believed to be the hair of Muhammad, the Prophet of Islam. For Sikhs Guru Nanak in his journey, seeking religious enlightenment, visited Kashmir.

Before the arrival of Buddhism in 3<sup>rd</sup> century B.C and that of Islam in the 14<sup>th</sup> century A.D, the Kashmiri society was made of various races, ethnic groups and native religions.<sup>6</sup> Kashmiries, who originally migrated from countries like Turkey, Iran, Central Asia and Afghanistan mainly occupy the Kashmir valley<sup>7</sup>. They were also spread out in the other areas of the state like Kishtwar, Bhadarwah, Doda and Ramban. They were intellectually sharp, friendly, cheerful and quite efficient in business and agriculture<sup>8</sup>. The second dominant ethnic group in Kashmir is Dards. They were originally Buddhists and Hindus, latter embraced the Islam and they occupy the northern part of the Kashmir valley<sup>9</sup>.

The third group of ethnic community is of Ladakhies, who are known for their religious tolerance; honesty and truthfulness<sup>10</sup>. Fourth ethnic community is of Dogras and the fifth group consists of Gujjar and Bakarwals who constitute a major part of the population of the Kashmir, are nomadic in character and are basically grazers. Among all of the above ethnic groups or communities having members who did not practice same religion. Prior to their conversion into Islam, Buddhists and Muslims of Kashmir retained quite a number of their ethnic traditions and practices.

Kashmir the land of galaxy of saints and sages, since time immemorial, witnessed major changes in religion. The earliest religious cult the snake-cult or Naga worshiper seems to have been established in the valley from a remote period and is one of the earliest religions of the land<sup>11</sup> which encountered in 3<sup>rd</sup> century B.C. with Buddhism. Even after the influence of Buddhism, Kashmir was glorious Hindu kingdom known for serving as a seat of learning Hinduism. After 13<sup>th</sup> century A.D. Hinduism and Buddhism encountered with Islam. Many Hindus and Buddhists were converted into Islam. After Islam, Sikhism emerged in Kashmir before Dogra rule. The above discussion of ethnic and religious encounter clears that a new culture emerged by the assimilation of different ethno-religious communities after sharing the traditions, values and beliefs. Every community had their own traditions which intermingled and shared it with other communities. The idea of sharing the traditions seems in the hindu- Muslim 'Rishi-Sufi' movement. Before the Sufi movement valley was already permeated with the traditions of Hindu asceticism called Rishism, and Buddhist renunciation. The origin of Rishi movement goes back to pre-Islamic times. Their philosophy after Buddhist era changed from retiring to caves in forests and mountains to meditate and subject themselves to stern austerities. Then Rihis took the form of wandering monks, who lived a simple life and dedicate themselves to serving the poor and needy. When Islam came to Kashmir Muslim-Rishi movement in Kashmir was founded by Noor-ud- Din Rishi (1377-1440)

#### **Kashmiriyat, Meaning and Definitions**

Kashmiriyat as a word itself suggests its meaning and is used to denote Kashmiri-ness. The word Kashmiriyat signifies a centuries-old indigenous secularism of Kashmir, characterized by religious and cultural harmony, brotherhood, patriotism, and pride for mountainous homeland of Kashmir by the Kashmiris. Kashmiriyat is a common word in Kashmir which is often used to determine the tolerance; that majority community used to display towards minority community both in religious and cultural aspects. The tolerant nature of Kashmiri people, their culture and centuries-old traditions, their manners of living together in a harmonious relationship by accepting and respecting one another's values gave birth to Kashmiriyat. In a symposium on the topic 'Composite Culture of Jammu and Kashmir', T.N. Madan observed, "The composite culture of Kashmir is and was a living reality of the Kashmir valley; it was a non-conflictual, integrally shared, and integrally harmonized culture of Kashmir". Further according to him, "It is a heritage rather than construction, and that it is based on acknowledgement of the legitimacy of difference". Further, in this regard, he emphasized 'we (Kashmiries) had strategies of not converting differences into conflict; we had strategies of living together without losing our individuality, of living together without turning hostile to each other". This composite culture is often designated as kashmiriyat.<sup>12</sup>

Kashmiriyat or Kashmiri-ness is the collection of values based on ethno-national, ethno-religious, cultural values, social consciousness, tolerant nature, shared beliefs and self-determinant ideologies of Kashmiri peoples.

The term Kashmiriyat is the invention of Kashmiri Pandit intellectuals, like the radical Prem Nath Bazaz, to represent the common cultural heritage of Kashmir. However the word Kashmiriyat has been used by people from various sections of society within the State and also outside. Some scholars tried their best to interpret the term and attempted to give religious connotation to word Kashmiriyat, but their religious affiliation to Kashmiriyat was challenged by other orate scholars such as Mohammad Ashraf and T. N. Madan. According to Mohammad Ashraf, "Kashmiriyat in true sense has nothing to do with religion. Kashmir's culture and traditions have been survived for thousands of years regardless the fact whether Kashmiries have professed Hinduism, Buddhism, or Islam". T.N. Madan said that composite culture of Kashmir has been a living reality, and this living reality came into existence through the interaction between people belonging to different faiths. In Kashmir, for centuries, people affiliated to different faiths had lived together, and their religious affiliations never affected their sense of belongingness to each other as a Kashmiri. However Mohammad Ishaq Khan regards Kashmiriyat as a vibrant experience of living together of Pandits and Muslims in a symbiotic relationship; according to him, for Pandits valley is the land of tirthas or pilgrimages and for Muslims as a place of shrines of Sufis and Rishis, is deep-rooted in the local context rather than Islam or Hinduism alone. Similarly to the above justification Chitrlekha Zutshi (a Kashmiri historian) says the fluidity of religious boundaries and the presence of syncretic religious culture are both integral parts of Kashmiriyat.

The most important part of Kashmiriyat is Sufi-Rishi movement in 14<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> century A.D, which gave birth to socio-cultural assimilation in Kashmir. Kashmiries together celebrated various festivals and the anniversaries of Sufi Saints, who taught them to live collectively and to leave out the religious differences. These Sufi Saints and Rishis especially Sheikh Noor-ud-Din Wali, tried to introduce the Islam in Kashmir which included the ancient or pre-Islamic culture and practices e.g. the teachings of (Lal Ded) the famous Shaviate Saint of Kashmir. Having deep respect for spirituality of Lal Ded, Sheikh despite being a Muslim is called the spiritual successor of Lal Ded. So, the Islam practiced by the people of Kashmir has been predominantly Sufi in nature rather than orthodox, that led to the development of the composite culture and more a kind of society in which people were well aware of their religiosity; but never let it come in between their relationships with each other. The common language (Koshur), common culture which includes more or less same dress pattern (Fern), food habits (Namkeen chai), and folklore as well as folk music till late 1980s closely tied the people in a bond of Kashmiriyat.

**Life sketch of Sheikh Noor-ud-Din Wali and his Contribution in Kashmiriyat**

Sheikh Noor-ud-din also known as Nund Rishi, Sheikh Noor-ud-din Noorani, Sheikh Noor din wali, Shajanand, Sheikh-ul-Alam and Alamdara-e-Kashmir (Flag bearer of Kashmir). He was the founder and the most popular saint of the Rishi cult of Kashmir. Sheikh is the darling of all Kashmiries, irrespective of caste and creed. His pious memory still continues to be cherished by his nomenclature. He was born on Friday 25<sup>th</sup> Rabbi-ul-awal, 774 hijri corresponding to 24<sup>th</sup> of September 1377 A.D, in a village of Kulgam tehsil called Khehygam Jagipora. His ancestry according to legends is shrouded in mystery. According to P.N. Razdan, "His ancestry according to records is traced to the Thakur Rajputs of Ujjain, where from they are said to have migrated to the Kishtwar township of Jammu region, and settled there. Latter, after their banishment from Kishtwar, his parents, Salar Sonz and Sadara (latter called Sadar Moaj) crossed into the Kashmir valley, and finally settled in a village of Kulgam tehsil called khehygam Jagipora. Nund rishi was born in this village but brought up in another village of the same Tehsil, called Mynoh Katymukh."<sup>13</sup> Another legend about his ancestry is, his father's name was Sheikh Salar-ud-din, who was converted to Islam after coming into contact with Sayed Hussain Simani. His mother Sadra Shiekh Salar-ud-din, whose pre-Islamic name was Salar Sanaz, belonged to the family of Rulers of Kishtwar.

When Sheikh was born, all the attempts by parents of Sheikh and the neighbors to feed him were resisted by the new-born. The struggle continued for three days. The parents felt dejected and dismayed. Then suddenly lalleshwari (lal Ded) the great Shaivaite saint of Kashmir, happened to enter the room, She took the infant in her own tits and whispered the following into his ears, If thou were not ashamed of being born, Why are you ashamed of feeding at the mother's breasts<sup>14</sup>? After this baby (Sheikh) is said to have responded and behaved as a normal baby. It seems the baby was waiting for a spiritual feed prior to physical nourishment. So the great source of inspiration for Nund rishi was Lalleshwari (Lal Ded) Shaivate saint of Kashmir. In one of his verses Sheikh yearns for the blessing of the Led Ded, that 'lala of Padmanpor has drunk Nector, and she is avatar and Yogini. Sheikh prayed for the same spiritual powers'.<sup>15</sup>

Nund Rishi is called spiritual successor of great Shaivaite saint Lal Ded or Lalleshwari. The philosophy, motivating elements, and religious ideas of Nund Rishi are same as Lalleshwari. For example, Lalleshwari was critique of religious practices or rituals of all kind. According to her, performing habitually religious practices might give the individual satisfaction, but in reality would do nothing to expand the limited vision, which leads to religious bigotry and non-tolerance. In one of her verses she says, Shiva is omnipresent, don't differentiate between Hindus and Muslims, if you are wise, you will recognize your true-self that is your real acquaintance with the Lord.<sup>16</sup>

Sheikh spent twelve years of his life inside a cave at Khimoh. Only spirituality was not practiced by Sheikh throughout of life, but he also sought to mould the pre-existing Rishi tradition. He transformed it into a vehicle for the Hindu- Muslim cultural space for interaction. He used the local institutions and methods to teach Islam which made Islam more intelligible for the Kashmiries.<sup>17</sup> It was the teachings and philosophy of Sheikh Noor-ud-Din Noorani which made him Rishi for Hindus and Sufi for Muslims. Sheikh Noor-ud-Din was very popular with all sects, classes and communities of people in the Valley. The Hindus believed that he was nominally a Muslim and in reality a Sanyasi of a high order, so they called him Sahazanand and preserved his sayings in Kashmiri Sharda script in the book named 'Rishi Nama'. The common people of Kashmir remember the saint by the affectionate name of Nund Rishi. There was a time in Kashmir when missionaries from Turkistan and Iran were busy in preaching the doctrine of Quran in their orthodox form. But Sheikh and his disciples gave indigenous color to Islam and popularized the cult of religious humanism; so that he is revered by the people of Kashmir till date and his sayings are in their heart. His verses are commonly known as Koshur Quran. He gave indigenous flavor to Islam by intermediating between the great traditions of Islam, ancient Kashmiri Brahmanical and Buddhist traditional beliefs and practices. It was because of his humanistic philosophy that he became the ideal for the Kashmiri people. He used poetry in common Kashmiri language to spread his message. In one of his verses, Sheikh Noor-ud-din preached for the brotherhood as, among the brothers of same parents, why did you create a barrier? Muslims and Hindus are one, when will God be kind to his servants?<sup>18</sup>

Sheikh is said to be the founder of Kashmiriyat along with [Lalleshwari], his spiritual teacher. But there emerged a question as to how Sheikh could be the founder of Kashmiriyat, if Kashmiriyat is founded in medieval period by Sheikh along with Lal Ded, how ancient Kashmiri culture lacks the uniqueness which latter became the core concept of Kashmiriyat? In fact Kashmiriyat is very old; it has its roots embedded in ancient Kashmiri culture. But in real sense of the term Kashmiriyat has been used in two senses. In the first sense it is used for the uniqueness of ancient culture and in other sense it has been used in modern times when Kashmir had passed through intolerance, mistrust and communal sentiments. In that latter meaning at that time, it is used to recall the old glorious past of Kashmir when the powerful community was committing atrocities on minor community, (Muslim rule in Kashmir before sultan Zain-ul-Abidin). At the same time that prominent Saint had born who changed the atmosphere of Kashmir by his teachings and gave a message of tolerance, respect, religiosity and socio-cultural assimilation, by creating a space for interaction between Hindus and Muslims through Sufi-Rishi movement. Thus he revived the ancient roots of kashmiri culture and in this way he is called the founder of Kashmiriyat. He believed in the institution of equality, peace, love and spirituality; by leaving

behind the religious differences. It was not so easy to change the reactionary Muslims and Hindus, side by side those anti-progressive elements kept their movement alive to oppose Sufi-Rishi movement. But the humanistic religion appealed the minds of reactionary Hindus and Muslims to stop their opposition. In one of his verse of Sheikh said, "Feed the hungry if you can, ask not the caste of naked"<sup>19</sup> Sufis of Kashmir shared several beliefs, practices and techniques with their counterpart Hindu Rishi and Buddhist renunciation movement, which were not originally Islamic. For example, like the Hindu Rishis and Buddhists, the Muslim Rishis also adopted stern austerities and often retired to the mountains and caves to meditate. Most of them remained unmarried<sup>20</sup>. Although the Islam bans celibacy, the Muslim Rishis justified their remaining unmarried on the grounds that Jesus, also a prophet for the Muslims was single, and such great Sufis as Hazrat Uwais Qarrani and the female mystic Rabia of Basra practiced celibacy.<sup>21</sup> Muslim Rishis like their Hindu predecessors, refrained from eating flesh. So strict were they in their refusal to take the life of any sentient being that they survived simply on dry wild vegetables and grasses. The cultural element that the Sufis adapted from Kashmir to Islam is meditation. Sufis developed mental potential through meditation and absorption, using the technique called *pass-e-anfass*. Sufis incorporated in Islam the belief in miracles from Kashmiri culture.<sup>22</sup>

Thus Sufi-Rishi practice shaped the concept of immanence of God, belief in miracles, meditation and asceticism from Hinduism and the spirit of Eight-fold path from Buddhism, and incorporated these to the spirit of 'Five Pillars' of Islam for launching the syncretic socio-religious space for interactions. Moreover, the most important contribution in socio-political space of interactions by Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin in evolution of Kashmiriyat is noteworthy.

#### **Contribution of Zain-ul-Abidin in Kashmiriyat**

Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin (1420-70 A.D) was influenced by the teachings of Sheikh Noor-ud-Din (1377-1420 A.D). It is a well known fact that during the rule of Sultan Sikander, the father of famous king Zain-ul-Abidin, popularly known as Budshah, the Hindus were persecuted. Idols and temples were demolished. "Sikander continued torture of the Hindu priests under the influence of his Prime Minister 'Suhabhata' a Brahmin who was converted to Islam, and is known as 'Butshikan' idol breaker."<sup>23</sup> Due to the forced conversions, a large number of Kashmiri Hindus migrated from Kashmir. After a long period of unsettlement and internal troubles, the valley witnessed a revolutionary change in the religious, social and political scene immediately after the Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin assumed powers of the state. The influence of Sheikh on the ideology of Budshah resulted in revolutionary changes in the socio-religious atmosphere of valley. The "Sultan was aware of the atrocities committed on Hindus as a result of which their population was reduced to only eleven families"<sup>24</sup> Budshah sent messengers to expelled Hindus with the invitations to return back to their home land. They accepted the offer with pleasure.

Hinduism once again flourished in the valley. They were free to celebrate their festivals, which were banned by Sikander. "In some festivals of Hindus like the 'advent of spring' in the month of March-April commonly called 'chaitra festival' and Durga Puja or the 'Vitasta festival the Sultan himself participated."<sup>25</sup> Many demolished temples were renovated and reconstructed. Both Hindus and Muslims were equally patronized. A separate Langar (charity house) was setup for Yogis and this place is still known as 'Jogilankar' in Rainawari. Havans were performed by him and he studied Hindu *sastras*, some of which like Mahabharata and Dasavatar etc were translated into Persian. Jizya was abolished and even the cow-slaughters were banned. Hindus called sultan Zain-ul-Abidin the incarnation of Vishnu 'Narayanavtar'. The generous and revolutionary steps taken by Sultan had great impact on the communities and reshaped the outlook of the majority Muslims. He taught the lesson that cultural identity based on human values, diversity and tolerance are not inconsistent with their own faith and religious beliefs. Thus a true believer and follower of Islam; a Muslim could simultaneously express respect for all the religions of the world. Ghulam Ahmed Mahjoor, one of the famous poets of Kashmir (1885-1952) expressed this through his beautiful poem, 'Mosques, temples, churches, hospices, and holy places to enter these many houses I will build but one doorway'.<sup>26</sup>

#### **Conclusion**

It is a well known fact that in Kashmir both Hindus and Muslims were peace loving people, but it is not natural law that any civilization or community had lived in peace and they will be always peaceful, history witnessed that many civilizations in the world were so peaceful for centuries, but in a certain point of time they became so self destructive and intolerant just as we witness in present Kashmir. So it is cruel turn of the time that Kashmiries they are now fuming with intolerance and fundamentalism. The violent situation emerged after a long period of glorious culmination of Kashmiriyat, when Kashmiriyat was connected to secular ideology of India through the Indra- Sheikh accord; new forces emerged in Kashmir to defend the concept of Kashmiriyat. JKLF separated the concept of Kashmiriyat from world secularism and started opposing the Indra-Sheikh accord. So after 1990 the concept of Kashmiriyat has been challenged. At present Kashmir is passing through turmoil due to militancy and intolerance. The hatred, mistrust and communal enmity have brought a bad name to Kashmir. The secular Kashmiriyat became the political tool for some to propagate their selfish political ideologies for their seditious interests. The secular Kashmiriyat became an issue of confrontation. Kashmir was known for religious tolerance but it is now associated with fundamentalism and intolerance. When all parts of India were passing through communal riots in 1947, only Kashmir was the place where no communal riot took place. Unfortunately now Kashmir is the issue of debate, it is questioned by people and intelligentsia for what Kashmiriyat stands, and what it was?

The unity and brotherhood turned into "us" and "they". At present there is question mark on Kashmiriyat to whom it represents. Muslims used "us" for themselves and "they" for Pandits, same is with Pundits also. Everyone has forgotten their centuries-old brotherhood and love for each others.

According to T. N. Madan, "What Kashmiriyat connotes today depends upon whom you ask a votary of the idea or a septic. Generally, it refers to Kashmiri identity cutting across the religious divide and defined by, above all, the key elements of the love of the homeland (Kashir) and common speech (Koshur). Besides, similar customs and practices (e.g. distribution of cooked or uncooked food as a token of goodwill, visits to shrines, and reverence for the relics of holy men) similar culinary and sartorial styles, shared folklore and folk music, etc., had in the past contributed to an ineffable sense of mutual recognition and togetherness that was both physical and cultural<sup>27</sup>. Mirza Arif who translated Quran into Kashmiri language, says that "Kashmiriyat is dead. Kashmiriyat means that you are for Kashmir, that you live for Kashmir, do good for Kashmir, loving everything of Kashmir, I do not think Kashmiriyat can be found anywhere now. The love that existed among us both Kashmiri Pandits (Hindus) and Muslims has gone. Even among educated people the love for each other exists no more. People were more religious in the past. Now they are murderers and looters who can do any thing for money. It pains me as a man of literature that we have lost Kashmiriyat"<sup>28</sup>

Many people today know about Kashmir for another unfortunate reason, as oppressions, brutality, illiteracy, militancy, separatist ideologies. Since the late 1980s it has been one of the contemporary world's most troubled and dangerous places, even a 'nuclear flashpoint' in a grip of what India calls 'terrorist insurgency' and Pakistan 'a freedom movement'. Over fifty thousand people, mostly Muslims but including Hindus, Sikhs, and security personal are said to have lost their lives in militancy related operations. According to Gen. (Retd.) S.K. Sinha, the then Governor of the state, the figures for deaths were: 20,000 militants, 15,000 civilians (almost all killed by terrorists), and 5,000 security personal. He characterized the manner of killings by terrorists as generally brutal<sup>29</sup>.

Kashmiriyat a combination of Muslims, Pandits, Buddhists cultural values, beliefs and spirituality is incomplete until the migrated pandits should be settled down once again in valley. However, there are various policies of government such as special employment packages announced by prime minister for migrated Pandits from valley and planning of separate colonies for Pandits in valley etc. But the major reason behind Pandits return to valley is Kashmiriyat, the love and spirit of brotherhood in both communities. In May 11, 2011, first time in the history of Panchayati elections, Kashmiri Pandit named Aisha Krishn, won elections from Wasan village around 20 km. from Srinagar, in which only four families lives in that village.

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