

than religion, prestige, interests, and status marks characterised the situation. Yet again, otherness comes from a difference that leaves the self and the other forever open to change for good or evil.

Later examples, like Kashmir for Kashmiris and Roti Agitation¹⁰, manifest the same anxiety. However, the 'self' regularly transmutes with the change in the overall situation. In the Kashmir for Kashmiris movement, the threat emanated from the bureaucrats from the neighbouring Punjab as the language of administration was replaced with Persian from Urdu. Bazaz (1954) puts it that armies of outsiders followed the officers from the plains with the intention of exploitation, leaving behind a line of successors to drain resources further.

In this way, the Punjabis and then the Dogra Rajputs began exerting power, which threatened the aboriginal upper classes. For six years, from 1925–1931, educated young Pandits rallied around to demand a due share in the administration of the state at the highest level. During this movement, Kashmiri Pandits worked in unison with Kashmir Muslims, although the stakes were not as high for the Muslims. Yet the bonhomie was short-lived as the Roti Agitation of 1932 was started by the Pandits after Maharaja conceded to opening the door of the Government services for Muslims.

Intellectual Factors

Understanding Kashmir through the bracketed ethos of 'Kashmiryat' has been the fancied methodological paradigm for most of the scholarship. The valley is imagined as a space where differential communities always lived with unity and harmony till militancy erupted in 1989. The fancied imagination not only presents an ahistorical picture but also denies any

¹⁰ Glancy Commission recommended series of reforms such as reforms of administrative structure and education, the representation of Muslims in services and minimum freedom for the press and public expression. Maharaja accepted these recommendations, which led to Pandit Yuvak Sabha agitating against these recommendations. (Bose, 2003)

cultural and political specificity to the Kashmiri political space. Subsequently, differential aspects of identity in Kashmir are washed down. Whitehead (2007) notes that the composite and accommodating culture of Kashmir, known as Kashmiryat, is often overstated to evoke a political paradise before a biblical fall and the embroiling of the valley in the rival nationalisms of India and Pakistan.

Kashmiryat has functioned more like a conduit to political actors who try to wade through Kashmir, providing enough space for modification per one's requirements. Given the concept itself is not based on any historical premise, there are few concerns about political correctness or validation. Gandhi symbolically invoked 'Kashmiryat' to create a picture of harmony in the valley that amounted to any spiteful conflict between the various Kashmir communities.¹¹ The towering leaders of Kashmir, Shiekh Abdullah and Jawaharlal Nehru, became ambassadors of Kashmiryat many times on public platforms. One such moment etched in the public memory and deeply reflective of Kashmiryat in public discourse happened on 2nd November 1947, when Shiekh Abdullah quoted Amir Khusro's Persian Sufi verse to and for Pandit Nehru,

Mun Tu Shudam, Tu Mun Shudi, Man Tan Shudam, Tujaan Shudi, Takasnagoyad bod Azeem, Mun Deegram, Tu Deggaree. (I am You and You are me; I am your body, you are my soul; So, none should hereafter say, I am someone and You someone else).¹²

Agrawal. N (2008) attempts to read Kashmiryat through linguistics and semiotics to arrive at an argument that Kashmiryat belongs to a class

¹¹ "Only Kashmir is a ray of hope in the time when the subcontinent is in darkness" were the words of MK Gandhi during the partition at the time when communal frenzy had taken all over, but did not touch Kashmir. (Zutshi, 1986)

¹² The timing and the usage of couplet are quite fascinating. It had only been a week since Kashmir's conditional accession to India and invoking Amir Khusro, who was an iconic Sufi musician and poet from medieval India who united Persian and Hindivi forms. Perceived as a very important figure in the Ganga-Jamuni tehzeeb, Khusru invocation here refers to Shiekh's adoration of a particular culture and politics.

of terms called 'empty signifiers'. It was a sort of new categorical order that imposed an order on the social collective of Jammu and Kashmir without resolving the legal issues. Kashmiryat indicates understanding Kashmir's changing relations with New Delhi over the years. On the one hand, New Delhi tightened its noose on the various autonomous provisions.

On the other hand, Sheikh Abdullah's favourite slogan, '*Izzat-oo-Aabroo ka maqam*' (position of dignity), was becoming redundant. So, a different vocabulary was needed to rephrase the demands and aspirations. Consequently, the Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture, and Languages bolstered the claim of National Conference leadership to debate and define the concept in a specific historical and cultural context.

(Ahad 2008:8) writes, "to lend an intellectual content and to mean to the much-publicized but vaguely worded idea/slogan: *izzat abroo ka muqam* and make it thus an effective and viable alternative and alimony for the Kashmiri aspirations, the phrase/expression was to our dismay hijacked and eventually used as an elixir for both the lords and their loyal subjects to make them feel much comfortable and more robust in their behaviour and attitude towards Kashmir and Kashmiris.¹³

Recently, Kashmiryat has found two more qualifiers: *Insaniyat* (humanity) and *Jhamooriyat* (democracy). Initially used by Atal Bihari Vajpayee in 2003 to break the thaw for initiating talks, this trinity was picked up in 2016 by the Modi government. It pitched to take the growth story of

13 Abdul Ahad claims that Kashmiryat was supposed to be change of attitudes that the people were the real masters of their desires; a panacea for political, social and economic misfortunes to force out inner Kashmiri urges, skills and energies and promote indigenous arts and crafts, agriculture, horticulture and floriculture for marketing a self-sufficient brand, a strategy to protect environmental degradation, urban vandalism and many other things. A former bureaucrat during the National Conference government his claim substantiates how National Conference officially tried to construct a discourse around Kashmiryat which obviously did not exist on ground before. For more see Ahad (2008).

Kashmir ahead. The usage of trinity reflects contradictions and inanity of avoidance.¹⁴

There have been constant attempts to locate Kashmiryat vis its political usage, earlier as an antidote for invalidating the two-nation theory and setting the tone for the religious and political plurality that the newly created post-colonial state espoused and now as a ploy to sustain rigidity regarding the status-quo.

Subsequently, scholarship has tried to look at Kashmiryat through two approaches. The first is to examine the relationship between religious identities, community definitions and state-building throughout the latter half and the first half of the two decades of the twentieth century. These interventions examine the various forms of belonging and challenge the primordial understanding of the identity in Kashmir. This discourse also clarifies how pre-colonial Kashmir was home to prototypical power struggles among elites to protect themselves from the existing state order. Zutshi (2003) and Rai (2004) argue that Kashmiryat is a series of dynamic identities that have emerged in interaction with and have sometimes been overshadowed by other forms of belonging. A tacit balance of region and religion has always existed that encompasses the Kashmiri sense of 'self'. The public discourse exhibited strong strands of religious universality and regional specificity.

Contrary to what Kashmiryat would like one to believe, the political culture of precolonial Kashmir was laced with various political, economic, and social differences. Though the differences were substantial, as suggested by the literary forms, poetic narratives, and other symbols, they allowed for accommodation and not the erasure of religious differ-

14 In Vajpayee's context the trinity is still somewhat usable. None of the word is explained vis-a-vis the present context. Kashmiryat does not specify the inclusions and exclusions and how the differing political demands can be negotiated under the gamut of Kashmiryat. Same holds true about Jamhooriyat as to what are the terms of democracy given the constant erosion of the special status of Jammu and Kashmir and Insaniyat has always become hostage to gross human right violations.

ences. However, parallel to this, one also finds an expression of Kashmir as a homeland and how it had to be saved from 'outsiders'.

It is also important to mention that the narrative of belonging – whether religious or regional – was carved in tandem with various inter and intra-politico-economical interactions and changes happening in Kashmir. Zutshi (2003) explains at length how, in the late pre-colonial era, the changing economic and political relationships created arenas for individuals to lay claims to leadership roles and definitions of community, religious, political or regional.

Since Kashmiryat is corroborated by the presence of syncretic religious cultures that are tolerant, the second approach navigates through its metaphysical understanding and how Kashmiryat cannot be understood without understanding the role of Rishis in promoting Islam against the backdrop of the socio-cultural context of Kashmir and not only the *Tawhidic* (oneness of God) universalism. The tradition was equally antithetical to the Brahminic supremacy prevalent in Kashmiri society.

Explaining Kashmir's transition to Islam and the role of Rishis, Khan (2011) meticulously shows how Rishis became a framework for associational life within a standard social, normative, and ritual order at the time when the Ulama from Central Asia grounded mostly in Sharia were propagating Islam in the valley. Though not an organised tradition, its gradual assimilation and absorption of local ascetic practices in the broader system of Islam gave this movement enormous authority and social importance.

Like other mystic traditions, the Rishi borrowed and innovated from different traditions. The Rishi concept of 'peace with all' was borrowed from Mahayana Buddhism. Secondly, this tradition also imbued a strong sense of resilience, which later became a strong character of Kashmiri Nationalism. The tradition questioned the caste and class orders that came with established religion. It flourished in the local popular dialects, making it accessible to artisans, peasants, tradespeople, and the oppressed castes. This inclusiveness reflects the popular social character of the tradition. Following Hindu ascetics, it retained essential elements of ancient popular religious culture, such as meditating in

caves, vegetarianism, maintaining celibacy, etc. While accommodating local Hindu-Buddhist practices to the Islamic framework, the Rishis gradually assimilated the people into the Islamic identity. What is, however, unique about this identity is not merely the assimilation of the Kashmiris in Islam over six centuries but also, importantly, their urge to live with their Pandit compatriots in symbolic rather than synergetic relationships. The vitality of the movement that separates and unites a deep metaphysical identity can be reflected in the verses of Shiekh Noorud din Wali, the pioneer of the Rishi tradition.

Among the brothers of the same parents
 Why did you create a barrier
 Muslims and Hindus are one.
 When will God be kind to His servants?
 (Kulliyat, II, 1981:33-34)

Khan (2011) and Shah (2011) explain that Kashmiryat has been defined to serve the ideological interests of the Indian state. Neither can Kashmiryat be explained as Kashmiri nationalism. The conception of nationalism is foreign to metaphysically oriented civilisations. Any culture's mystical, metaphysical grounding implies that modern political appropriations are prone to suspicion.

The identity crisis is a modern phenomenon, and attempting to graft it onto traditional cultures is not admissible. Kashmir's self or spirit of individuality cannot be located without an in-depth analysis of its religions, mythologies and, most importantly, metaphysics. A comprehensive conception of Kashmiryat requires understanding the metaphysical tradition underlaid by diverse religious and philosophical expressions.

Conclusion

Like elsewhere, they imagined the nation arose when education offered privileged access to understanding centuries of oppression. The development of social communication and the growth of print linked the ideas