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# HIMALAYAN AND CENTRAL ASIAN STUDIES

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## *NADIM SPECIAL*

**Deodar in a Storm: Nadim and the Pantheon**

*Braj B. Kachru*

**Lyricism in Nadim's Poetry**

*T.N. Dhar 'Kundan'*

**Nadim – The Path Finder to Kashmiri Poesy and Poetics**

*P.N. Kachru*

**D.N. Kaul 'Nadim' in Historical Perspective**

*M.L. Raina*

**Dina Nath Kaul 'Nadim'**

**The 'Gentle Colossus' of Modern Kashmiri Literature**

*Onkar Kachru*

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## HIMALAYAN AND CENTRAL ASIAN STUDIES

**Editor : K. WARIKOO**  
**Guest Editor : RAVINDER KAUL**  
**Assistant Editor : SHARAD K. SONI**

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## CONTRIBUTORS

**Prof. Braj B. Kachru** is the Center for Advanced Study Professor of Linguistics and Jubilee Professor of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Emeritus, University of Illinois at Urbana, Illinois, USA.

**T.N. Dhar 'Kundan'** is a well known Kashmiri writer having authored several works related to the society and culture of Kashmir.

**P.N. Kachru**, a well known artist from Kashmir is one of the founders of modern art movement in Kashmir.

**Prof. M.L. Raina** has retired from J&K Education Service.

**Onkar Kachru** is known for his contribution to introducing Kashmiri literature to the Hindi world, besides being a journalist by profession for over three decades.

**Ravinder Kaul**, a columnist and cultural activist from Kashmir, has been regularly contributing to both the print and electronic media.

**Prof. S. Bhatt** has been a former Advisor to the United Nations.

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## *Editor's Page*

Kashmir in ancient times was a place where scholarship, theatre, fine arts, architecture and poetry thrived. However, vicissitudes of history did not allow this ideal situation to continue for long. Soon a time came when all the art forms and scholarly pursuits touched their nadir. Yet, history bears testimony to the fact that, of all creative endeavours, it is poetry alone that survives in even the most intolerant regimes and the most inhospitable climes. In Kashmir too, while all other manifestations of human creativity suffered during various periods of oppressive rule, it is poetry alone that refused to succumb. Therefore, one can trace an almost uninterrupted flow of poetic expression in Kashmir from the times of the great Sanskrit poets upto the present.

The poetic works of Ksemendra, Mammata, Anandvardhan, Bilhana and Abhinavagupta are among the finest available in ancient Indian literature. Similarly, during the Muslim rule the name and fame of Kashmiri poets who wrote poetry in Persian language travelled far and wide and impressed the connoisseurs of poetry even in Iran. Laleshwari and Nund Rishi, the harbingers of a new era of poetry in Kashmir, only continued the tradition of poetic excellence in the beautiful valley. Their unique contribution to the legacy of letters in Kashmir was taking poetry out of the closed circle of the scholars writing in classical languages and bringing it closer to the common masses of the valley of *yemberzal*. Many more who followed the path chosen by these two illustrious Kashmiris included Habba Khatoon, Rupa Bhawani, Mahmood Gami, Arnimal, Wahab Khar, Maqbool Kralwari, Rehman Dar, Shamas Faqir, Socha Kral, Nyam Sahib, Samad Mir, Rasul Mir, Master Zinda Kaul, and Ahad Zargar who enriched Kashmiri language with their own distinct style and expression.

Dina Nath 'Nadim', in many ways, was the renaissance man of Kashmiri literature. He emerged on the scene when the repertoire of

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Kashmiri poetry mainly consisted of mystic and devotional poetry of earlier poets of the language and love poetry of Rasul Mir. Mahjoor had just begun to graduate from themes relating to love and longing and *gul-o-bulbul* to socially relevant issues. Abdul Ahad 'Azad' was trying to follow in the footsteps of 'Mahjoor', his mentor. 'Nadim' arrived on the scene of Kashmiri literature like a breath of fresh air. He shunned the traditional similes and metaphors of Kashmiri poetry and, almost from the very beginning, used the modern progressive idiom to take Kashmiri poetry into a new era of awakening.

Although progressive in outlook and committed to the leftist thought, Nadim's poetry never stooped to the level of sloganeering. The poetic element remained intact even in his most committed of poems. Another conscious effort made by Nadim was to rid Kashmiri language of the influences of the Persian language. Even Mahjoor was not free from these influences. Nadim used several such indigenous words and idioms in Kashmiri poetry which till then were considered to be inappropriate for poetic expression.

Nadim can easily be called the Ksemendra of Kashmiri poetry for it was he who brought Kashmiri poetry closer to the common masses. He highlighted their love and their sorrow, their trials and tribulations and their dreams formed the focal point of his poetry in the same manner in which common man was, for the first time, made the *nayaka* by Ksemendra in his social satires in Sanskrit many centuries ago.

Nadim brought about a significant change not only in content but also in the form of Kashmiri poetry. He was the first poet to utilise the forms of sonnet and free verse in Kashmiri. He wrote the first opera, *Bombur Yemberzal* in Kashmiri language. He also wrote short poems which he preferred to call *Harisaat*. This was probably his attempt to return to his roots as *Harisaat*, according to his own admission, were influenced by *Lal Vaakh*.

Nadim was a teacher. He, like many other Kashmiri Pandits taught three Rs to successive generations of Kashmiris belonging to all

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religions. He was also a politically awakened soul. When the moment of reckoning came, he did not sit within the four walls of his house and actively associated himself with the progressive movements of the day. He was among the first Kashmiri Pandits to join the struggle of common Kashmiris against autocratic rule, thus belying the misconception that Kashmiri Pandits were a part of the feudal structure.

Given the creative genius of Nadim and his lasting contribution to the pluralistic and composite cultural heritage of Kashmir, the Himalayan Research and Cultural Foundation organized a National Seminar to highlight the life and literature of Dina Nath Nadim on his 87<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary in collaboration with the India International Centre, New Delhi on 16 March 2003. This Special Issue of the *Himalayan and Central Asian Studies*, seeks to record the creative genius of Nadim who continues to live through his poetry and literary contribution. Nadim's contemporaries like eminent scholar and linguist Prof. Braj B. Kachru, eminent artist and one of the founders of modern cultural movement in Kashmir P.N.Kachroo, and others like O.N.Kachru, T.N.Dhar 'Kundan' and Prof. M.L.Raina have enriched this Special Issue by their learned papers.

**Ravinder Kaul**



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## ***DEODAR IN A STORM:*** **NADIM AND THE PANTHEON**

***Braj B. Kachru***

### INTRODUCTION<sup>1</sup>

Dinanath Nadim's (1916 - 1988) senior and venerable contemporary Zinda Kaul "Masterji" (1884 - 1965) has been compared with the Amarnath cave of Kashmir: spiritually elevating, distant but uplifting for the believers.<sup>2</sup> This comparison evokes the serenity, aura, and impact one experienced in his presence. And Nadim, Masterji's younger contemporary - almost a generation apart - has been compared with the *deodār* (a species of cedar, *Cedrus deodāra*; Kash. *devador*). The Kashmiris associate the *deodār* with elegance and strength. And to those who are familiar with the environs of Srinagar, it reminds them of the majestic *deodār* pillars in the major mosque in the Valley, dating back to A.D. 1401.

In Sanskrit *deva-dārū* has more elevated symbolism, it signifies, "timber of the gods." That Nadim should evoke this comparison from his Kashmiri friends and those who visited him from other parts of India, is not surprising. It is this impact that the Hindi writer Kamleshwar, is perhaps thinking of when he compares Nadim with the *deodār* tree:<sup>3</sup>

"When I think of Nadim, I am instantly reminded of the *deodār* tree - *deodār* and Nadim - one, a tree and the other, a poet. There is no identity (*ektā*). But I don't know why with the picture of [his] personality, I can't help but imagine the [*deodār*] tree." Even without the metaphor of *deodār*, his contemporary Teng, considers Nadim "[...] a very tall Kashmiri poet, both literally and figuratively." Nadim reminds him of yet another Kashmiri icon, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, since "[b]oth cast their long shadows over the eventful century and

even beyond that. Just as Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah emancipated Kashmir from the bounds of feudalism and autocracy. Nadim liberated Kashmiri language from the shackles of a decadent (*sic*) tradition [...] What is more, he is a great Kashmiri as well and like the great Sheikh Abdullah, a standard bearer of Kashmir's distinct identity - cultural as well as political." (1985: 13). These assessments of Kamleshwar and Teng contextualize Nadim and his creativity within the literary renaissance and political turmoil of the Nadim era.

Nadim had a presence and he cut a formidable figure: tall, disheveled, and imposing, and while walking, a tendency to stoop. What left an impression on a person were his soft, large and dark, misty eyes. In his personal interaction, there was nothing of a revolutionary about him. He was polite, sociable, compassionate, and extremely sensitive. Whatever revolutionary fire there was in Nadim was not apparent in his unassuming and reassuring - almost shy - personality. The revolutionary fire in him would light up on the platform when Nadim recited his poems of social revolution and change. It was a different Nadim - a *deodār* tree in a storm.

The revolutionary fire was in his pen, which never really went out. This message of revolution made him a pre-eminent representative of the period, and as Lone rightly observes, that made Nadim steal "[...] a march on his predecessors and contemporaries."<sup>4</sup> Lone, a creative writer of distinction in Kashmiri, should know; he has extensively researched the literary history of his language. And now, turning to the impact of Nadim, one might ask: what are the main reasons for his impact on his younger contemporaries?

### **IDEOLOGICAL CONTEXT**

Nadim was one of the major messengers for initiating the paradigm change in the Kashmiri language and its literary culture. That he was a prime mover in the shift is not disputed.

In his earlier writing the ideological context was provided by the Progressive Writers' Movement. In the 1940s Progressivism (*pragativād*) was a much-debated and much-argued topic in the literary circles in India. The movement came much later to Kashmir, and initially the debate was much muted. It, however, became a primary ideological paradigm after 1947. Nadim began to ask questions which were on the agenda of the Progressive Writers' Movement in India much earlier: The question of social tensions, the exploitation by the Dogra regime and by the powerful *zamindars* (landlords). These ideological ingredients became the soul of the messages.

What appear now like worn-out themes of ideological slogan-mongering and indeed propaganda had a context and social reality in the turmoil of Kashmir of that period. We see that in poems such as *Tsa mīri kārṅvān ban* ("You became leader of the caravan"), *Nāray Inqalāb* ("The call for revolution"), *Me chu Hyond ta Musalmān beyi insān banāvun* ("I have to turn Hindus and Muslims again into human beings"), *Shervani sund khāb* ("The dream of Shervani"), *kashiry shury sund tarāna* ("The song of a Kashmiri child"), *Jangbāz khabardār* ("Warmongers beware"), *Prutshun chum* ("I must ask").

In an interview with Zafar Ahmad<sup>5</sup>, Nadim says, "Yes, intellectually and practically (*vyavhārik*), I have been associated with this [Progressive Writers] movement." And, elaborating on this point, Nadim further observes:

*"Actually my poetry has flowed due to that movement. This movement provided stimulus for my poetry. It [the movement] did not encourage only me, but it also encouraged Rahman Rahi, Ghulam Nabi Firaq and many other poets from here. Ali Mohamad Lone, Som Nath Zutshi and Hari Kishen Kaul and others have benefited."*

The turning point in Nadim's poetry had actually arrived in the 1940s when Kashmiris were woefully confronted with Pakistan instigated tribal attack on the Valley: In local parlance

it is remembered as “the raid.” And recalling “the Raid,” Nadim says that one result of it was that all Kashmiris felt “a tension and [an emotional] upsurge (“*akh gubhār ... akh grakh*”). At that time Nadim began to think afresh and write afresh (“*ami vakhta kor me śoruh navi sara sochun ta navi sara lekhun.*”<sup>6</sup>

This “*navi sara lekhun*” (“writing in a new vein”) and “*navi sara sochun*” (“fresh thinking”), for example, led to new genres and new experimentation in Kashmiri. This period also initiated raw nationalism and patriotism drenched in *Kashmiriyat* (*Kashmiriness*). The *nazms* such as the following were poet’s response to the challenges of the time.

- (a) *butrāth c ny zardāras kits*  
*bochi bochi khelī nādāras kits*
- (b) *tsa chukh kashīri hund javān*  
*nakhas tse chuy haluk nisān*  
*tse kun vuchān chu drus jahān*  
*tsa gand kamar ta tul kamand*  
*sitara son kar buland*  
*kashīri hund tsa shān ban*  
*nakhas tse chuy haluk nishān*  
*tsa miri kāravān ban*  
*kashīri pāsbān ban*

This poem had emotional grip on the psyche of the Kashmiris: The National Conference leaders were providing political slogans and words in abundance, but Nadim provided songs and stirring recitations: It was a mass movement. The rhyme of “*tsa chukh kashīri hund javān*” is, says Nadim,

“very short and forceful (*baḍa tshot* and forceful), and for Kashmiris it was also innovative. The content was not new, it was already present in several poems of Abdul Ahad Azad, and in some poems of Ghulam Ahmad Mahjur and Arif, as well. The style was that of Urdu and this was Hafiz’s style.”<sup>7</sup>

The two poems that attracted the attention of people and that of the Cultural Front toward him are “*Tsa chukh kashiri hund javān*” and “*Grāv*” (“A complaint”). The first poem, Nadim continued, attracted the attention of people towards him (“*ta lūkan ti peyi me pyath nazar*”).<sup>8</sup>

These poems were recited by Nadim at Mujahid Manzil<sup>9</sup>, they created, adds Nadim, “a sensation in the Mujahid Manzil.”<sup>10</sup> The poem *Irāda* (“Determination”) was composed just after Nadim joined the Cultural Front. In this poem there are traces of the influence of the Russian Poet V.V. Mayakovsky; Nadim indeed accepts that by the time he wrote this poem he, “had read [Mayakovsky’s] books.”<sup>11</sup>

In *Irāda* (“Determination”) we see Nadim’s innovative technique of refreshing imagery and lexical cohesion: The worn-out theme is reconstructed with effective lexical alternation, reduplication, and alliteration. This poem is essentially a propaganda piece, and certainly not one of Nadim’s major poems. However, in the genre of patriotic poems in response to the multiple fronts Kashmiris were facing in the past 1940s, *Irāda*, indeed is a memorable poem, and certainly stands out among the poems written on this theme by his contemporaries. The poetic craft of *Irāda* has several levels: The focal lexical items are *vozul* (red) and *vushun* (warm) around which Nadim constructs semantically appropriate lexical sets of nouns and verbs and creates an effect of movement, turmoil and commotion (e.g., *āvlun, janūn, josh, malakh, nār, tufān, vāv, vuzamala*) and verbs connote sacrifice, and martyrdom (e.g., *fidā gatshun, jān dyun, dazun*). In this outward turmoil and commotion, and inward determination of the people nature is an active participant: *vuzamala* (thunder) and *bunyu* (earthquake) indicating restlessness and commotion. The phoneasthetic reduplication enhances this effect (e.g., *vushun vushun, vozul vozul, yi āvlun yi āvlun, tavay tavay*).

In vocabulary, Nadim's strategies are actually very simple: he seems to use words the way clever children - and one might add, mischievous children - use marbles, with intriguing combinations in rather effortless ways. Nadim's contemporary Teng captures this aspect of his creativity succinctly when he recognizes that Nadim's "[...] torrent like flow of refreshing Kashmiri vocabulary is a phenomenon unknown to Kashmiri before his emergence." (1985: 13)

The effect of this, wordsmith's dexterity in *Irāda* and such other propaganda poems, has to be contextualized within the historical context of the time, the mode of presentation in the political rallies and the participants in such rallies. It was a sociopolitically charged context and Nadim was the people's poet on the stage-performing.

The poem "*Bagyavana az*" ("I will not sing today") that "changed the trend" and provided a credo for Kashmiri creative writers. It was recited by young Kashmiris in the Valley and its surroundings with infectious enthusiasm: It introduced a refreshing innovative strain to Kashmiri poetry: The same way as Mahjur did earlier, but Nadim had a fresh idiom and a new message. The Nadimian phonaesthetic quality, and his diction were distinct. The process of Kashmirization of the idiom was subtle. The message was that poetic creativity need not be overwhelmed by Persianization and Sanskritization of the language: The switch was to make such resources *desī* in the sense that they are fully assimilated in the language. The medium was contemporary as was the *mantra*. Consider, for example, the use of words such as "*jangbāz*" ("quarrelsome") and "*jālsāz*" ("cunning") in

*bagyavana az*  
*ti kyāzi az chi jangbāz jālsāz hol gandith*  
*kashiri myāni zāg hyath*

The use of collocations - the combination of two or more words with specific meanings - exhibit considerable dexterity. Nadim demonstrates his skill in embedding these lexical choices in appropriate contexts most effectively. Consider, for example, “*hol gandīth*” (“to gird up one’s loins”), “*zāg hyath*” (“vigilant watching”), and “*āyi grāyi*” (“angling”). This poem introduced free verse (“*mukt chand*”) into Kashmiri. Rainā (1972: 131) provides the following translation of the poem:

I will not sing today,  
I will not sing  
of roses and of *bulbuls*  
of irises and hyacinths.  
I will not sing  
Those drunken and ravishing  
Dulcet and sleepy-eyed songs.  
No more such songs for me!  
I will not sing those songs today.  
Dust clouds of war have robbed the iris of her hue,  
The *bulbul* lies silenced by the thunderous roar of  
guns,  
Chains are all a-jingle in the haunts of hyacinths.  
A haze has blinded lightning’s eyes,  
Hill and mountain lie crouched in fear,  
And black death  
Holds all cloud tops in its embrace.  
I will not sing today  
For the wily warmonger lies in ambush for my land.

The poem *Trivanzah* (“Fifty-three”) presents yet another facet of Nadim: It was actually written in 1952, and thematically it does not refer to the year 1953.

It was the time, recalls Nadim, “[...] when Kashmiri leadership also went to some extent, astray. The leaders [of Kashmir] tried to find for themselves treasures, so that they would become independent from everyone, and openly

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establish their Raj (“*khula dula kara hōn rajah ta tājah*”).”<sup>12</sup> There was, however, a group that Nadim believed was against such leaders.

The poem *Trivanzah* (“Fifty-three”) pioneered dramatic dialogue in Kashmiri. In its technique, in its style, and in what Nadim characterizes, “its *dāstān* (story),” *Trivanzah* was indeed fresh (“n v”). The poem was inspired by a very touching - but not uncommon - Kashmiri experience.

The story that inspired the poem is not very complex; it was a common story of deprivation, exploitation and poverty that is all pervasive and part of almost every Kashmiri’s life. The story goes back to the days of food rationing in the Valley in the 1950s, when one collected one’s monthly allocation of rice on a ‘ration-card’ (a card issued to each family by the government to obtain rice - and other items such as salt and sugar - on special price). The ration-card was usually kept with a person who owned and operated a machine (*dāmishīn* ‘rice machine’) for removing husk from the paddy. For a small price, the person would collect the monthly ration, husk it, clean it, and deliver the rice to the family who owned the ration-card. And here is Nadim’s summary of his experience.<sup>13</sup>

We were not as a family able to collect the monthly ration of rice. We used to give the money and get the pounded rice. One day, I went to the “machinewalla” [*mishīni valis*] and there I saw the machine was running. And in front of the machine there was a heap of rice. My ration-card was with him. I said, “*he*,<sup>14</sup> we need one or two *trakh* [approx. 12 lbs.] of rice, so that we can eat.” He replied, “*Yes*”,<sup>15</sup> I will give you a *trakh* or so of rice. I cannot give you more, because we have to share it with all [customers].

At that time an old woman walked in, she was accompanied perhaps by her daughter’s son. She told him [the *machinewalla*] “Give me also, *haz*,<sup>16</sup> a *seer* or so [2 lbs.] of rice.” He replied, “not a *dāny* [a small quantity, weight of about 8 barley-corns] and you talk of a *seer*! You have



already taken whatever was your due up to *phāgan* or *chet* [February-March and March-April]. I cannot give you any more.” And it was *poh* [December-January].

The little boy who was with the woman, came closer to the heap of rice and picked up a handful of it. The machine man had a *chappal* [sandals] with *mekh* [large nail] in the bottom. And he hit the boy with the chappal on his hand. The boy shrieked. I could not stand it. I told the machine man then, “I will take the rice later. Do give the boy one *manut* [3 lbs.] of rice out of my rice. And I came home and wrote the poem. The poem is *Trivanzah* [“Fifty-three”].

The poem was a true reflection of its time. In mimeographed and handwritten versions, it was distributed in thousands. Nadim believes that the poem had some impact on the political change of Kashmir in 1953.<sup>17</sup>

### **SOCIO-POLITICAL ACTIVISM**

Nadim’s social and political activism during this period is inseparable from his literary creativity; this is especially evident in what may be called his “political” poems. It is difficult to identify any poem from this period, which is devoid of such social and ideological concerns.

I believe there are reasons for this - political, historical, and ideological. The 1947 invasion of Kashmir and its ongoing aftermath continue to take a heavy emotional, psychological, and social toll, let alone what it has done politically and economically to Kashmir and to other parts of India. What happened in October 1947 has touched every Kashmiri in destructive ways - Hindus, Sikhs, and Muslims - and no Kashmiri writer has been able to ignore it. The Kashmiris are experiencing, as it were, a psychological roller-coaster - hope and fear, anger and destruction and agony and death.

But above all, what Kashmiris confront is a constant threat and reality of war and insecurity, and we have witnessed

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and experienced it again and again since 1947. And everybody is paying a price for it - an expectant mother, a waiting beloved, an eager wife awaiting her husband's return - expectation, hope, and love are normal human emotions, signs of life and living. But for most Kashmiris these cherished experiences of life and love have ceased to be so simple. These are delicate dreams, but there is also an ever-present agony of imminent war - the risk of the destruction of one's dreams.

Life's cherished simple things have become difficult due to the dark clouds of political conflict and intrigue. It is here that literature, life, and politics have come together. In his very delicate poem *Me cham āsh pagahach* ("I Have hope for tomorrow") written in 1952, Nadim has addressed this psychological tension - hope and fear and love and agony.

This poem presents three vignettes of complex interplay of emotions and expectations - a mother's, a beloved's, and a wife's.

But they have one shared concern, and that concern is the refrain of the song:

*dapān jang chu vothvun*  
*pagah gotsh na sapdun*  
They say  
War will break out!  
But no -  
not tomorrow!

The first picture, that of an expectant mother, is a dream of a mother's ecstasy and hope of tomorrow.

I hope of tomorrow  
When the world will be splendid  
When the days will be radiant  
When the flowers will blossom  
and flower gardens will be blooming

When the earth will be bubbling  
and meadows shimmering  
when the bosoms will be bursting with fountains of  
love  
When the world will be shining  
But then there is agony:  
They say  
War will break out!  
But no -  
not tomorrow!

The second picture is of a woman waiting for her lover's  
arrival - just tomorrow. And she dreams of that tomorrow:

I hope of tomorrow -  
my day of rendezvous  
When the dusk tenderly arrives  
I will wait behind the branches of trees,  
in ecstasy with love -  
just like Himāl  
And if he is late,  
I don't care,  
I will be there,  
I have a promise to keep.  
But then agony returns:  
They say  
War will break out!  
But no -  
not tomorrow!

The third picture is of a wife waiting for the return of her  
laborer husband. During the hard winter in the Valley he has  
been away, he has gone to the plains to earn some money, with  
arduous physical labor. This was - and still is - the fate and  
practice of poor Kashmiris during long and oppressive winter  
months. And now he will return, and she has hope of tomorrow:

The father of my children will arrive!  
The moment he calls me  
I will rush to greet him -  
to press him in my arms  
to welcome him in ecstasy -  
to place him on fresh green grass.  
The father of my children will come  
And he will bring gifts for us all  
chintz for me  
jewelry for our daughter  
money for Habīb's wife...

But then, with this hope the dark thought is not too far away in her mind:

They say  
War will break out!  
But no -  
not tomorrow!

A number of poems composed during this period - Nadim's earlier period of compositions in Kashmiri - are indeed poems of mobilization with intense nationalism and patriotism. These are reminiscent of the *vir kavita* (the poetry of heroism in early Hindi poetry). If one sees the underlying reasons for this message of *mobilization*, one sees primarily three targets: First, the instigators of the invasion ("the Raid") who violated the borders of the Valley; second, the major powers who created the crisis of the Cold War; and the third target was, of course, an ideological one that successfully initiated and implemented the policy of "divide and rule." The instigators of this ideology were the British and a variety of Indian groups. This ideology nourished sectarian loyalties, religious conflicts, divisive politics, that ultimately resulted in the division of the sub-continent.

Nadim has written several poems of mobilization. These are songs for oral recitation, and essentially meant for large

audiences. In the 1940s there were indeed abundant opportunities for that - in protest rallies, political meetings, and literary get-togethers. These poems were broadcast over Radio Kashmir and were sung in schools and public functions. The “vigilance groups” would recite them in every *mohallā* of Srinagar. These groups were formed by the National Conference after Maharaja Hari Singh’s government finally collapsed, and the Maharaja and his entourage quietly escaped through the dark tunnel of the Banihal pass from the Valley into the safer terrain of Jammu and beyond.

A wit has said that after the runaway Maharaja, the leader of the National Conference, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, picked up the government of the State, as it were, in the Lal Chowk of Srinagar - the prize was waiting for the Sheikh in the Chowk. A network of *halqā* committees were set up by the new-hastily formed-government, who, in turn, took over the nightwatch of the neighborhoods. There was no defense - there was hardly any army; the Valley was in confusion. The volunteers of the *halqā* committees - Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs - would keep a vigil in the neighborhoods, and to pass the time, they would recite the songs of Mahjur and Nadim and others - in Urdu and in Kashmiri.

In this cluster of Nadim’s poems, there is a conflation of oral and written modes. A number of these poems have bardic characteristics - a blend of emotionalism, features of mobilization, and entertaining musicality. And Nadim successfully relates these poems to the context of the time when he says:<sup>18</sup>

In 1947 when India gained independence we [Kashmiris] also became independent. It was then that I felt a transformation within me. The intense resentment (*ākrosh sankul*) and energy within me manifested itself in poetry. The whole fabric of Kashmiri poetry had undergone a drastic change. We were surrounded with slogans. It was

not easy for me to escape from these. What I did was to use the slogans in the Kashmiri language in such a way that the 1950s turned out to be a period of fresh awakening and development.

Nadim was indeed right: In those days Kashmir and Kashmiris were “surrounded with slogans,” and the poet used this genre of mobilization with splendid emotional effect and appeal. In fact, he recognizes that he “became the recognized spokesperson of the new movement” who “continued to carry the banner of the movement.”<sup>19</sup> A number of poems written during this period are essentially “political” poems with a poignant social appeal; the themes have been skillfully localized. The result is that even as “political pieces,” they are not mere slogan-mongering. These were essentially the poems of peace.

One has to turn to his much-celebrated poem *Dal hāzani hund vatsun* (“Song of the Boatwoman from Lake Dal”) to note Nadim’s sensitivity and skill in effective use of style shifts. In the long tradition of Kashmiri poetry - both literary and folk poetry - the peasant girl (*gris kūr*) has been portrayed as an incarnation of innocence, as a personification of Hīmāl of heaven or a “Caucasian Fairy,” or as an arch-representative of love-lorn beauty singing melancholic songs in separation from her beloved. In the Valley, it was the peasant girl to whom the myriad flowers would whisper and the *bulbuls* would sing. It is a poetic world of make-believe, which continued to keep average Kashmiris away from the dismal reality. But Nadim sees yet another facet of the peasant girl in her own *vatsun* - an intense poem.

This poem is an unparalleled revelation of the emotions of a *hāzani* (boatwoman) and shifts in narration and intensity. This is a reality, which had escaped earlier Kashmiri poets. It eluded them because it did not fit into the well-established traditional patterns of Kashmiri poetry - the grid of stifling classical moulds inherited from Sanskrit and Persian.

Nadim's portrayal is sensitive, socially relevant, and in its design and patterning, innovative.

After the 1960s, however, there was a gradual ideological shift in Nadim; Arif provides a subtle hint about it when he comments that,<sup>20</sup>

“Nadim's vigor [*josh*] still in tact. However, on account of his indifferent health and *kavā ke dhīre muzahmil hone se*, the religious and spiritual colour has started to appear [in his poetry].”

The above observation of Arif, is conveyed by Teng in different words:<sup>21</sup>

In his view, Nadim began “[...] as a progressive *of sorts*, he [Nadim] finally settled at the creative and macabre detachment which is always the hallmark of a genuine artist.” [Emphasis added].

### **CANONICAL SHIFT**

Nadim skillfully emancipated the Kashmiri language from morbid dependence on traditional linguistic resources - primarily that of Sanskrit and Persian - that continued to provide models for thematic and stylistic creativity to most of his contemporaries. It is not that Nadim completely put the traditional linguistic resources and devices aside - he simply used these on his own terms.

In his strategies of creativity there is an awareness that over-dependence on such linguistic substrata had divorced the literary language from the people. This dependence on Sanskrit and Persian literary forms had caused acute stylistic and thematic atrophy. Nadim was most comfortable with “vernacular” Kashmiri, the type of language that Sitikantha Acharya, the author of *Mahanaya Prakasha* (“Illumination of Highest Attainment or Discipline”) has called *sarvagochara deśī bhāsā*: It is this variety of Kashmiri that became Nadim's favorite linguistic resource.<sup>22</sup>

Nadim intuitively realized the fact that the Kashmiri language actually exists in a DIGLOSSIC situation, that functionally the language has two or more varieties. In literature, the formal and colloquial varieties of a language are generally characterized as H(igh) and L(ow), as is the case, for example, in Arabic and Greek, and in India with Bengali, Telugu, and Hindi.

In the case of Kashmiri, the Sanskritized and Persianized varieties have traditionally been used for literary creativity, and in extreme cases these two varieties are not always mutually exclusive. These two varieties have also been termed “Hindu Kashmiri” and “Muslim Kashmiri” (e.g., George Grierson). This distinction, on the basis of religion, can only partially be justified since there is an extensive *variety switch* across religions. We notice such a shift, for example, in Parmananda (1791-1874) and in Mahjur (1985-1952). It is also claimed that there is also the *rekhtā* variety of Kashmiri, which, as the word indicates, is a mixed variety.

### **NADIM’S IMPACT AND THE NADIM ERA**

What then is Nadimian impact on his contemporaries and beyond? The first impact is a broader one and may be characterized as *thematic shift*. In Kashmiri literature, the earlier themes - whether from the Sanskrit or the Persian canons - had been stylized, and as a consequence, had inhibited creativity. These had almost exhausted the language and atrophied creativity. Nadim without a conflict introduced a shift away from such canons - a gradual and effective shift. He slowly opened up the native Kashmiri contexts in local themes and imagery, thus altering the earlier paradigms. The Kashmiri context was not peripheral for Nadim; it was the center of his overall creativity, and he gracefully adapted the language to express that centrality. The Nadimian credo was aptly summarized by him as *chi asi bath nevy nagma nevy, sher nevy*. This very simple credo claims that “our songs are *new*, our dances are *new*, and



our verses (*sher*) are new.” This was a correct assessment of this period of turmoil. We have yet to attempt a typology of the thematic *newness* of Nadim’s *œuvre*, or that of the Nadim era.

The second impact is *linguistic shift*. In a nativizing context, Nadim introduced an unparalleled linguistic shift which, for lack of a better word, may be termed a “vernacularization” of the language. In doing so, Nadim again used the strategy of centrality of Kashmiri and neutrality in terms of Persianization and Sanskritization. Nadim, of course, was not the first to adopt this stylistic device; it had been experimented with, for example, by Mahjur and Azad, too. But Nadim excelled in this strategy, and has yet to be surpassed in this.

The third impact is contextualization of his creativity within the milieu of the people, as we have seen in the poem *Dal hāzni hund vatsun* (“Song of the Boatwoman from Lake Dal”), and in *Trivanzah* (“Fifty-three”). One again sees this in his operas and in whatever little Nadim wrote in the genre of the short story.

The fourth impact is in Nadim’s range in *genre development* in the language. In his creativity Nadim used a wide variety of genres, and in some cases he was actually the initiator of new genres in Kashmiri (e.g., opera, short story). When one thinks of Nadim, one primarily thinks of him as a poet. Poetry is, however, only one facet of his creativity - though a dominant and major facet. And even within the broad genre of poetry, Nadim was able to use a variety of verse forms, some not attempted earlier in Kashmiri. The range of his verse forms include sonnets, blank verse, free verse, dirges, *harysāth*, *zītni*, *haiku* and *nav nahaj*.

And finally, Nadim was able to cohesively integrate within his creativity the layer upon layer of linguistic and cultural hybridity which is the result of various historical and linguistic factors. At the linguistic level, Nadim demonstrates hybridization

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in his style choice and style conflation, and bringing together a variety of strands from the folk tradition, from the blend of the Rishi and Sufi traditions, and by focusing on assimilation of various types which have vaguely been characterized as *Kashmiriyat* (“*Kashmiriness*”). Nadim’s creativity provides fine examples of this linguistic syncretism.

It is by these innovative stylistic devices and syncretism that Nadim opened a wide vista of possibilities in literary creativity. This shift proved emancipating for the language, and he engaged himself in the task with almost messianic spirit. His personality was an added asset. He held the hand of many aspiring writers and set them delicately - and persuasively - on the path of literary creativity in Kashmiri, thus encouraging talented Kashmiris to write in their mother tongue, even when Kashmiri was never their language of education, or of literary or technical discourse.

What made things more complicated for new writers in Kashmiri was that there was often no shared script for writing the language. It was not always an easy task to persuade young Kashmiris to follow the path, because the lure of writing in languages of wider communication was stronger. Nevertheless, Nadim often succeeded.

### **ALBATROSS AROUND THE NECK**

Once Nadim chose Kashmiri -in place of Hindi, Urdu, or English - as the medium of his creativity, he became what is labeled a “minority writer.”<sup>23</sup> The choice of a language such as Kashmiri for literary creativity has its own fulfillment, but it has its limitations and frustrations, too. Nadim carried that albatross around his neck with deliberate choice, and with grace and elegance. In India - as elsewhere - it is not easy to be a writer in a minority language, particularly if the language is not taught in an intensive and regular way in the educational curriculum, and has limited, if any, avenues of publication, and practically no critical discourse.

The attitude toward Kashmiri is now only mildly different from Lachman Raina's (d. 1898) attitude as expressed in his *masnavi* in which he says that "Writing verse in Kashmiri is groping in the dark." But then, much later, Masterji in his poem *Pananykath* ("About ourselves"), sees some hope when he says that "the Kashmiris are to be congratulated. They were divided and had lost their language, but have now at last luckily found it by great effort."<sup>24</sup>

Kashmiris may have "luckily found" their tongue, but the earlier attitude toward their language actually has not changed. One, therefore, understands why Mahjur, one of the great poets of the Renaissance period of Kashmiri, characterizes Kashmiri as "a *backward* language" in a joint letter with editor of now defunct, *Dehātī Duniyā*, Gangadhar Bhat Dehati. The letter reproduced by T.N. Kaul (1988: 168) is from "[...] three letters, unpublished so far and well-preserved by the grandsons of Mahjoor..." (167).

This letter is in response to an invitation to attend Indian Litterateurs Conference. The text provides an insightful backdrop for contextualizing the status of minority literatures at that time. This context is not much changed over half a century later.

Thanks for inviting us to the Indian Litterateurs Conference. It is, indeed, very essential to hold such a conference and you deserve congratulations from the country and the nation for your efforts to this end. It would be a matter of joy and pride for us if we could attend this conference. But it is a deplorable fact - which you too will not deny - that the Indian litterateur is destined to live in poverty and penury. Others apart, even Munshi Premchand's life presents a horrible lesson.

One of the undersigned writes poetry in a backward language like Kashmiri and the other is a writer in Urdu, and both belong to a neglected country. We are sorry to

point out that due to our limited means we cannot bear the travel expenses to reach the conference venue and so with a heavy heart are hesitant to accept your cordial invitation. Isn't it our misfortune to miss such a golden chance for lack of a small sum? Normally one would be willing to spend thousands of rupees to avail of such an opportunity.

Did your organization not bear in mind the poverty of the Indian litterateur? If it did so, then what solution did it devise for this? Or was it that the sponsors of this conference thought the Indian writers also to be like Bernard Shaw, Sinclair and Pearl Buck who roll in luxury and are often born with golden spoons in their mouths?

While we pray for the success of your conference, we also hope that you will find an effective solution to this problem.”<sup>25</sup>

The albatross of a minority language and its “backwardness” yield a variety of consequences: The medium and its message may confine one in highly restricted boundaries of geography and it provides limited and often indifferent readership and resources to a writer. In the case of Kashmiri, the total Kashmiri-using population is around four million. And if one is lucky, and if one's creativity in the language transcends linguistic boundaries, it is essentially through translations or transcreations into a language of wider communication. There is just a handful of Nadim's translations in languages, that cut across linguistic and cultural boundaries, and out of these, only a few translations do any justice to the original text.

That is, of course, not much different from the general picture in other Indian languages. Nadim has yet to find his Edward Fitz Gerald (1809-1883) or his A.K. Ramanujan (1929-1993), who excelled in the craft of translation - the former, from Persian into English, and the latter, from Tamil and Kannada into English. There are a variety of issues which one faces in translating Nadim's poetry, as one does in translating any other writer.

The grid of constraints that the albatross of “a minority language” creates is perhaps one reason why creativity in Kashmiri has not been necessarily the first choice of many Kashmiri writers. A majority of Kashmiri poets have used Kashmiri after writing in another dominant language - on second thought, as it were. The list is indeed long and includes, Zinda Kaul Masterji, Ghulam Ahmad Mahjur, Rahman Rahi, Mirza Arif, Abdul Sattar Aasi, and, of course, Dinanath Nadim. In multilingual societies this situation is again not uncommon. In India and beyond there are creative writers who compose poetry in one language (English) and write prose in another (for example, in Marathi or Kannada). Nadim is conscious of this situation, and rightly argues that,<sup>26</sup> “It is not essential that poetry be composed in one’s mother tongue, and the mother tongue be the medium of creativity [...] A poet can compose poems in any language; the point is that one should be competent in that language.” In fact, to prove his point, Nadim mentions Ghalib and Iqbal as such *bākamāl* (peerless, exquisite) poets who excelled in their creativity in a language which was not their mother tongue.<sup>22</sup>

Nadim’s choice of Kashmiri meant that he faced another limitation - that of choosing for his literary creativity a language that has primarily been transmitted orally. That does not mean that Kashmiri does not have a writing system - it has a multiplicity of writing systems. What makes this more complex is that each writing system is now related to religious and other identities, and invokes ideologically loaded attitudes.

If we exclude the *śārdā* script - now almost obsolete - there are still three writing conventions: the Perso-Arabic, the Devanāgarī, and the Roman. In Kashmir, the Perso-Arabic script has patronage from the government and is recognized as the official script. Outside Kashmir, only a few can read this script, and a small percentage of Kashmiris have limited familiarity with the Devanāgarī and Roman scripts.

The new generation of Kashmiris - in India, Pakistan or elsewhere - is not familiar with any of the three scripts in any serious sense, as far as their use of them for writing Kashmiri is concerned. But they still have some opportunities to listen to Kashmiri poetry and to *ghazals*, *vanvun* and to *lilās* etc., on the radio, on the tapes, and in oral recitation at social and other functions. The input thus is primarily aural.

Whatever little is printed in Kashmiri in Kashmir - in very meager quantities - has negligible circulation and readership. The main avenues for a Kashmiri writer to gain some visibility are Radio Kashmir, and perhaps television and literary and social functions. Altogether, these amount to very restricted avenues. The audience for Kashmiri writers, and their reading public, are primarily in Kashmir and in the regions where there are handful of families of diasporic Kashmiris. Kashmiris who have left Kashmir in earlier waves of migration have very little, if any, competence in or any serious interest in the Kashmiri language, and certainly not in literary Kashmiri.

In Kashmir and beyond, Kashmiri literature has not been taught or studied within any well-motivated or well-structured context of academic discourse, or within the framework of comparative literature. Whatever critical literature is available in the language consists essentially of translations from other languages - English, Urdu, and Hindi - and these are very derivative. There are a handful of insightful and critical studies of individual authors and critical trends, but very few Kashmiris read these. And finally there is, of course, the perennial problem of a lack of good translations of the Kashmiri texts as discussed above — as is the case with those of India's other minority languages - into other Indian or non-Indian languages.

It is within this socio-cultural, literary, and historical context of the Kashmiri language that one must consider the attitude of Kashmiris toward the literary traditions of the

language, their identity with the language, and their lack of excitement and enthusiasm toward literary creativity in the language. And given this social, literary, and attitudinal background of the Kashmiris, Nadim's decision - as those of others - to champion the cause of Kashmiri and carry the language's albatross around their necks is laudable. These confines were as real for Nadim as they are now for other Kashmiri writers or writers of other minority languages.

### **ON TRANSCREATING NADIM**

The above discussion of Nadim's creativity in Kashmiri and its translations in languages of wider communication (e.g., Hindi, Urdu, English) opens up a Pandora's box of a variety of theoretical, ideological and methodological issues about *transcreating* a text (to use P. Lal's useful term) across languages and cultures. In recent years the provocative issues about the theory of translation have been studied from a variety of insightful perspectives, however, I will not go into that digression here. I have briefly mentioned some of these issues, specifically with reference to Nadim in an earlier study (Kachru 1995) which actually focuses on the issues of bilingual's creativity in world Englishes.

In cross-linguistic and cross-cultural translations, Nadim's text has to establish *appropriateness* at multiple levels with reference to the 'transcreated' language and the reader. The concept "appropriateness" is rather complex and entails, as Larry Smith (1992) has discussed with reference to world Englishes, *intelligibility*, *comprehensibility*, and *interpretability*.

One sonnet of Nadim 'Zūn' ("The moon") provides an insightful example of the issues related to transcreation or translation. The illustrative specimen is my own translation of the poem (1981b).

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The moon rose like a *tsoṭ*  
That day, the *tsoṭ*-like moon ascended behind the hills looking  
wan and worn like a gown of Pompur tweed  
with a tattered collar and loose collar-bands,  
revealing sad scars over her silvery skin.  
She was weary and tired  
and lusterless  
as a counterfeit pallid rupee-coin  
deceitfully given to an unsuspecting woman labourer  
by a wily master.  
The *tsoṭ*-like moon ascended  
and the hills grew hungry.  
The clouds were slowly putting out their cooking fires.  
But the forest nymphs began to kindle their oven fires.  
And steaming rice seemed to shoot up  
over the hill tops.  
And, murmuring hope to my starving belly,  
I gazed and gazed at the promising sky.

The transcreation of this sonnet into another language becomes progressively complex as one confronts *shared*, *partially shared*, or *non-shared* linguistic or socio-cultural canons. The process of redefining and recontextualizing the text becomes more challenging at each stage and with each process.

The genre of sonnet in Kashmiri is patterned on the English sonnet, and it is a recent literary innovation in Kashmiri in which Nadim excelled. The Kashmirization of the sonnet form is obvious in many ways. First, by the use of what may be termed ‘culture-dependent’ lexis; for example, *tsoṭ* ‘Kashmiri nān’; *tani* ‘collar-band’; *mozreny* ‘a female laborer’; *ṭhekadār* ‘contractor’; *gaj* ‘a traditional place for cooking’; *voṭhadān* ‘a traditional portable oven for cooking’. Second, by the use of fixed collocations which entail shared knowledge of the local (in this case Kashmiri) context, for example, *pompur poṭ* ‘tweed made in Pompur town’. Third, the use of language-specific fixed collocations and idioms. Consider, for example, the following:



*batakuly khasiny*  
cooked rice trees (plural) to grow  
'to have trees resembling cooked rice'  
*shech bāvany*  
'to share a secret'  
*ach phiry phiry vuchun*  
eyes turn turn to see  
'to gaze incessantly'  
*pana pana gatshun*  
thread thread to happen  
'to fall apart (to be very tired)'  
*phāka phor*  
hungry stomach  
'to be hungry'

Fourth, the use of phonaesthetic features, for example, as in the following line in Kashmiri.

*ropa tani hani hani pana pana gamits pompur pot hish.*

There is no way this phonaesthetic effect can be created in a translation.

This much about the segmentation. Now let me explain some other features of the text. The metaphor *zūn* ('the moon') as *tsoṭ* (Kashmiri *nān* 'bread') is very potent and suggestive. The personification of the moon is consistent with Indian mythology and literary tradition. But, in Nadim, there is a shift in such personification. In this sonnet, the depiction of the moon as *tsoṭ* acquires centrality. It evokes the feelings which are traditionally associated with the moon in Indian literature and folklore. But there the similarity ends. Consider also the range of lexis which occupies the modifier position: 'the collar-bands are loose' is a sign of grief; among the Kashmiri Pandits 'loose collar-bands' are indicators of mourning. The moon is lusterless 'like a counterfeit pallid rupee-coin' deceitfully passed on with other coins to an unsuspecting woman laborer by a wily contractor. The skyscape further intensifies the suggestion of unsatisfied hunger: the clouds 'put out their cooking fires,' the

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forest nymphs ‘kindle their oven fires’ and steaming rice seems to ‘shoot up over the hill tops.’ And what does the laborer do? ‘Murmuring hope to her starving belly, she gazes at the promising sky.’

There are several questions one can ask about the underlying context of the sonnet. How relevant is it to mention that Nadim was an active member of the leftist Progressive Writers Association, and to note that in this sonnet there is a conscious effort to neutralize his style - not to use Persianized or Sanskritized varieties of Kashmiri. And the major point is: how does transcreation in Punjabi, Hindi, Tamil, or, in our specific case in English, recreate the devices and strategies used for ‘foregrounding’ by Nadim? These questions have faced translators - and creative writers - since the first cross-linguistic translation was attempted, or since literary creativity in the ‘other’ tongue was attempted.

The English version of Nadim’s poem given above illustrates that the transcreation of the text results in marginal crossover - it is mere approximation. The complexities are at the lexical, collocational, syntactic, phonaesthetic, and socio-cultural levels. And this limitation of ‘translation’ is generally well recognized.

**CROSSING THE BOUNDARIES**

One might ask: How does a “minority” language writer cross the linguistic and cultural boundaries to become part of a wider reading public? In India such modest channels include literary awards and other types of recognition - the annual Sahitya Akademi Award, that Nadim received in 1986. This was rather late in his life, since he had not qualified for it earlier, because a collection of his work had not been published until then. One of the conditions of the award is that there be a published work for evaluation. Nadim, therefore, was recognized after most of his contemporaries had received the

award. Before the Akademi's recognition, Nadim received in 1971 what was then the Soviet Land Nehru Award. In 1985 he was the recipient of the Kalhana Award.

### **AMONG THE PANTHEON**

Nadim ultimately settled on his mother tongue, perhaps well realizing what frustrating constraints his decision would impose on him. In order to appreciate the contribution of a writer in a minority language, particularly one with a limited official status and highly restricted public domains of function, translation (or transcreation) has traditionally been used as one resource to make what are called 'minor' literary cultures known across languages.

Another way is to compare a writer with other writers who are part of the pantheon of writers in Indian or other languages of wider communication. One would say ideally that these should be languages, which have long, evaluative, critical and literary traditions, and a variety of translations into other Indian and non-Indian languages. These comparisons of Nadim with other writers are just indicative of how his contribution has been placed within a larger cross-cultural, cross-literary, and comparative context by scholars from Kashmir and other parts of India. That comparison, then makes Nadim a part of a larger literary context of India, and perhaps beyond.

There are various comparisons of Nadim - both with writers of the languages of the subcontinent and with those of Western languages. In South Asian languages with great literary cultures, Nadim has been compared in Bengali with India's Sukanta Bhattacharya (1926-1947) and Bangladesh's Kazi Nazrul Islam (1889-1976), in Urdu with Pakistan's Josh Malihabadi (1898-1982) and Faiz Ahmad Faiz (1911-1984), in Telugu with Sri Sri (1910-1983), in Malayalam with Vallatol (1878-1958), and in Hindi with Suryakant Tripathi "Nirala"

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(1896-1961) and Gajanan Madhava Muktibodh (1917-1969). And among writers in Western literatures, he has been compared with Vladimir Vladimirovich Mayakovsky (1893-1930) in Russian and Pablo Neruda (1904 -1973) in Spanish.<sup>27</sup>

These comparisons are attempts to establish shared identities - at levels of ideology, thematic, and stylistic innovations. Such comparisons with other writers also give us some idea about the names whose memory Nadim evokes in terms of his creativity, his commitment to social change, and his stature as a writer and thinker. Such cross-literary grouping is indeed subjective, but it is not entirely un insightful. It provides vital indicators for assessing what company Nadim keeps among the pantheon of South Asian and international literatures.

### **NOTES AND REFERENCES**

1. I would like to express my gratitude and thanks to Chaman Lal Sapru for sending me a copy of his edited volume, *Dinanath Nadim: Abhinandan Granth* (1985) to honour and celebrate Nadim's unparalleled contribution to Kashmiri literary culture. I found the contributions in the volume insightful and valuable, particularly the interviews with Nadim by Zafar Ahmad (pp.17-24) and Chaman Lal Sapru (pp.25-29).
2. V.S. Naravane, "An Hour with Masterji", *Kashmir*, September 1955, pp.187-189.
3. See Kamleshwar. In Chamanlal Sapru, ed., *Dinanath Nadim Abhinandan Granth* (in Hindi), (Srinagar: Jammu-Kashmir Rashtrabhasha Prachar Samati, 1985), pp.30-34.
4. See Ali Mohammad Lone, "Kashmiri Poetry". In *Indian Poetry Today*, III, New Delhi, 1977.
5. See Chamanlal Sapru, ed., *Dinanath Nadim Abhinandan Granth* (in Hindi), (Srinagar: J&K Rashtrabhasha Prachar Samati, 1985), p.21.
6. Interview with me on 17 July 1974.
7. *Ibid.*
8. *Ibid.*
9. Mujahid Manzil is name of the headquarters of the National Conference.

**Braj B. Kachru**

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10. Located in the heart of Srinagar city close to, what used to be the Fateh Kadal (*Kadal* “bridge”).
11. Interview
12. *Ibid.*
13. *Ibid.*
14. *Ibid.*
15. *he* is an attention-catcher used in conversation in Kashmiri.
16. *ahan* ‘yes’ and *sa*, ‘a marker of politeness’ in Kashmiri.
17. An honorific marker, generally used addressing a Kashmiri Muslim.
18. Interview with Sapru. In Sapru, *op.cit.*, 1985, p.28.
19. Sapru in *ibid.*, p.82.
20. See Arif in *ibid.*
21. Teng in *ibid.*
22. A detailed analysis of *Bāṇāsūr Kathā* is given in Shashi Shekhar Toshkhani, *Bāṇāsūr Kathā* [in Hindi], Ph. D. dissertation, Kashmir University, 1975.
23. The use of this term is very controversial. There is no generally acceptable definition of the term. There, however, are several variables with reference to which the term has been defined.
24. See Braj B. Kachru, *Kashmiri Literature*. Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1981, pp.34-35; see also Braj B. Kachru, *The Dying linguistic heritage of Kashmiris: Kashmiri literary culture and language*, (Forthcoming).
25. See Kaul, 1988, p.168.
26. Interview with Zafar Ahmad in Sapru, *op.cit.*, p.21.
27. See, e.g., Machwe in *ibid.*, p.10.

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***DEODAR IN A STORM: NADIM AND THE PANTHEON***

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## LYRICISM IN NADIM'S POETRY

*Triloki Nath Dhar 'Kundan'*

At the outset let me make it clear that I am not a critic. I did not aspire to be one for fear of inviting the comment of Alexander Pope that 'those who fail as poets become critics.' I am a poet and, therefore, I shall make my observations about Nadim's poetry as a poet only. Pt. Dina Nath Kaul 'Nadim' was born on March 18, 1916. His father, Pt. Shankar Kaul passed away when he was only six years old. His revered mother, Smt. Sukh Mali, who lived another two decades to give Nadim a firm base for writing poetry full of music and melody, brought him up. Initially he wrote in Urdu and Hindi but later he switched over to his mother tongue, Kashmiri, which augured well for him and for the language as well. Nadim struggled from his younger days and had to give tuitions to students in order to augment the earnings of his mother from her spinning wheel. His mother, a lady of great determination, would sing in the accompaniment of the spinning wheel that left an indelible mark on his young and fertile mind.

In one of his interviews Nadim revealed to Zafar Ahmad that initially Ghalib as also Iqbal influenced him. Later he was impressed by the poetry of Chakbast. In his youth Josh, Ahsan Danish and a local poet Mastana, who incidentally was an ascetic, influenced him a lot. Ideologically, the writings of Nehru, Bertrand Russell, Mayak-ovsky, Chekhov and the neo-romantic writers of the English classics affected him. In the same interview he was referred to his maternal grandfather Pt. Vishnu Bhatta and his mother Smt. Sukh Mali both of whom used to write poetry in Kashmiri. This interview brings to light three very important areas of influence that shaped Nadim's creativity- Mastana, neo-romantic English poets and his mother. Once he told me that his mother used to sing the poems written by the great 18<sup>th</sup> century poetess Arnimal and a poem composed by a contemporary poet Dina Nath Almast, which had appeared in an issue of the *Pratap* the college

magazine of Shri Pratap College, Srinagar. Arnimal was not only a poetess of repute but was well versed in Kashmiri classical music. According to the well known classical singer of Kashmir, Mohammad Abdullah Tibetbaqal, it was Arnimal who rearranged the ragas of Kashmiri Sufiana Kalam called *Maqam*, which are in vogue even to date. No wonder that her compositions are melodious and musical.

Nadim, it seems, acquired the delicacy of mysticism from the poetry of the ascetic poet Mastana, the scintillating musicality from the rich lyrics of Arnimal and sensitivity and emotional finesse from the writings of the neo-romantic English poets. He got the melody from the songs sung by his revered mother, which must have been resounding in his ears all the time. I am not discussing here the ideological influence that he absorbed from the writings of the great thinkers and writers mentioned by him, as my only intention is to highlight the beauty of form and the lyricism in his compositions and not the richness of thought and content, which no doubt they have. Any creative art has two aspects to it, its content and its form. The form invariably goes after the content and in case the form is not suitable to the content the poetry becomes weak and tasteless. An attractive form with a weak or shallow content may still attract by the sheer music of it being soothing to the ears, as most of present day film songs, but even a meaningful content loses its effect and charm if the form is inappropriate. Nadim was conscious of this fact and invariably used a form best suited to the content of his composition. It is said in Sanskrit poetics that a tasteful sentence from which we derive pleasure is poetry, *Vakyam rasatmakam kavyam*. There is no doubt that a musical and lyrical composition does give us a pleasure in a great measure.

Once during a conversation with me Nadim said that his mother used to sing Arnimal's lyrics like *Gaen gaen mo kar ranga yandro, kanaryan ti phalilay malayo bo, Arni rang gome shrawaen hiye kar yiye darshun me diye* and others. He also said that she liked the poem written by Almast in his college days, *Vyesiye tsala hai tsala hai tsala hai, sur panas mala hai, tsalith ti tsala hai vana naey*. Listening to his mother while she sang such powerful and musical lyrics



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brought to him the importance of musicality and lyricism in poetry. Even when he wrote revolutionary poems like *Ba gyava na az*, he made a rich use of repetition of words and phrases to give it a musical effect, *Ba gyava na, ba gyava na, ba gyava na zanh*. The internal rhyming of the words made this powerful song attractive and smooth like a running brook, *Gulan ta Bulbulan, Khumaro ho't ta mara mo't*. The effect got redoubled when it came to be used in pure lyrics like Vegetable vendor's song (*Dal Hanzyeni hund gyavun*), *Kyah vanay paetmi brasvari pyayas, zor aesim na laeth zora drayas, do'da hyadur trovum pharitalai hai, hai volay hai, volay hai, volay hai* or the song 'My motherland' (*Myon Vatan*). Here he describes the motherland in this rich expression and rhyming similes: *Gama pyatha yatskael vo'thmut trela hyath zan mam hyu, Adanuk badam hyu*. Nadim was accused of using unsuitable similes and rightly so. He took more care about the musical qualities of his compositions and for this he used musical and lyrical rhymes even if the simile may not have been appropriate. He writes in his famous sonnet, *Zoon khaets tso't hish, pana pana gaemaets pompaer po't hish*. Again in that remarkable poem describing moles on the face of a damsel he says, *Lakhchi chhu lakhchun, taph prazalvun*. Many more such examples can be quoted where he preferred melodious and musical expressions in spite of similes not fully appropriate.

Nadim used internal rhyming with a great aplomb. Take for example this couplet of her: *Qanda naabada aerada mutui, phanda karith tsolum kotui, khanda kaernam lookan thiye, kar yiye darshun me diye*. Nadim follows suit in a number of his compositions. As an illustration let us take these excerpts from one of his poems: *Achhidari vonum vatnaech doluth, Sonahari dopum pazi hubi mehanath, Vanhari thovum rut naav, divath. Na chha shaha khasavas, na chha kuni Vosa dros*. In another song titled 'The first Bloom' (*Adanuk Posh*) he writes, *Mo't yavun zan po't aam phirith, Zan drav buji kuji dedi kun zenani go'brah tankhahdara hyu, Mudai gandith me thali thali vuchhmas, do'pmas naevnai kunsae y bag*. He does not give up this beautiful technique even when he writes

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a free verse. This gives his free verse compositions an effective smooth flow of a waterfall or a mountain brook. Take the case of a poem like 'The Thief', (*Tsoor*). He writes, *Doh dyan guzrovum zonum lo'b myay lo'b* and *Asavun shokhah vasavaen mai*.

Conservative writers have always emphasized the importance of the meter and the rhyme scheme in poetry. Nadim was a revolutionary. How could he afford not to revolt against the rigidity of the rules prescribed in various treatises on poetics? He was head on in the political arena and a forerunner in the fight for the downtrodden. He was a committed writer who was opposed to all forms of exploitation, colonization and subjugation. He could not be cowed down to the restrictions of the meter and rhyme scheme as such. That is the reason perhaps that he did not write too many Ghazals. He wrote a lot in free verse. Yet he made it sure that the compositions did not lose on music or melody. Words in melodious arrangement came to him naturally and that too in a perfect order as if a fountain of water gushing forth from its source unhindered. I give here two examples to bring home this fact. *Gulan ta bulbulan ta so'mblan hundui, khumara ho't ta mara mo't, mo'dur mo'dur ta nyandri ho't su nagma kanh, bo gyava na az'* and '*Vushun vo'zul, vushun vushun, vushun vo'zul, vo'zul vo'zul, yi khoon myong jawan chhus tuphan hyu janoon myon*. He has written a monumental masterpiece in defence of world peace called *Mye chham aash pagahaech*, (I have hope for tomorrow). He read it in the Biscoe Memorial Hall in a conference of young writers presided over by the great legendary poet Master Zinda Kaul and Professor Jya Lal Kaul, the well-known connoisseur of literature raised his hat and gave him a standing ovation. The melody of this poem is marvellous, a treaty to listen.

*Do'has gash huri gul ta gulzar prazalan,  
zaminas saesar lagi ta sabzar prazalan,  
vachhas manz humis lola phamvar prazalan,  
Kazul laganay me gatshan aechh kazali,  
diyamtsaeh ta babityend gatshan me vo'zali,  
to dahi vahaer dashahar yi son saeli –  
Dapan jang chhu vo'thvun pagah gotsh na sapdun.*

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Nadim excels in his diction. His use of words and phrases is unparalleled. True, the Kashmiri language cannot be dismissed as a dialect. It has a rich source in the Vedic Sanskrit from which it has originally been derived when it was called *Lok Bhasha* or the common man's lingua. It is enriched by the vocabulary drawn from so many languages such as Sanskrit, Persian, Urdu, Hindi, Punjabi and so on. Yet when we read masters of this language we find that they have heavily borrowed from other languages, Sanskrit and Persian in particular. Mehmood Gami, Maqbool Karalawari and even Mahjoor have used Persian words in abundance. Parmanand, Krishna Razdan and many others have drawn from Sanskrit. Nadim discovered an ocean-like depth in his mother tongue. He found vast scope in ordinary day-to-day usages and has used them with a remarkable deftness, finesse and artistry. He writes,

*Martsa vangan ta vangan chhi byon byon,  
mas malaer hiv ruvangan chhi byon byon,  
navi manz chhi karan tho'la tho'lay,  
hay vo'lay hay vo'lay hay'*

and again

*'Taza muji baed chhi hili tshayi zotan,  
demba go'gjah vo'zaj beeba khotan,  
phula vangan ta paerimi alay hay,  
hay vo'lay hay, vo'lay hay, vo'lay hay.*

No wonder, therefore, that the song *Bo'mbro bo'mbro shama ranga bo'mbro* from his famous opera, *Bombaer ta Yambaerzal* should have become so popular throughout the country when it was used in a Hindi film sequence. Arjun Dev Majboor calls him 'Monarch of Words' and remarks that 'when he picks his words they touch the loftiness of the sky'. His son Shantiveer has observed that 'Nadim has superb control over the phonetics of his language and his lexical repertoire is phenomenal. His imagery is breathtaking and his lyricism intimate.' Ravinder Ravi has this to say: 'He coined new words, created new imageries and symbols to enrich Kashmiri language. He extricated and excavated words, scanned and chiselled them and used them artistically in his couplets'. In his book *Kashmiri Sahitya ka Itihaas*,

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Dr. Shashi Shekhar Toshkhani has stated that 'Nadim not only exploited the strength and scope of the language to its full but also expanded it enormously. He was particularly conscious about the musicality of his compositions in addition to the usage of words. The originality that he possessed in the matter of symbols and imageries is unsurpassed and unparalleled'.

Nadim has been a trendsetter. He has for the first time written free verse, sonnet and opera in Kashmiri language. He also used traditional forms of *Geet*, *Ghazal*, *Rubai*, *Vatsun* and *Nazm*. He used to draw a plan for his compositions, determine an outline best suited to the message that he wanted to convey and then write using choicest words, superb technique and delicate phrases. He would give new meaning to ordinary words and play with his vocabulary as a master artist and craftsman that he was. He had a unique capacity to accommodate an ocean of idea in a small pot of verse. Once he told me about a four-liner called *Tukh* written by him that he had originally planned to write a long poem on that topic. Then he decided to condense it into a *Nazm* but eventually he settled on a four-liner. Reading his poems one wonders wherefrom he gets all these words and expressions and how he weaves them into an effective verse. One can cite examples galore but suffice it to give a few of them here.

*vo'thi bagaech kukli koo koo kaer kaer бага бабар вужаване,*

or

*Aechharvalav daenan dits aesh pheryan do'n,  
pathar pyayi kagadas pyath mo'khta lar zan*

or

*Un samrajuk pal vurkaevith chhamba din daerith –  
Allah ho or Samayichi honji zan lakhchun prazlyav  
chamnan zan raet sontas sai,  
chilai kalanuk tapa do'ha hyu magas basyom hara hyu*

or

*Tsa nar chhuk alav chhuk, tsa yavanuk jalav chhuk.*

A poet observes what an ordinary person also observes but he sees through it and perceives the underlying essence of the object of observation. He then describes it in the backdrop of the life's

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philosophy that he has evolved over the years. Nadim had an uncanny capacity to observe and then present it in a melodious composition. He would, on the one hand, write a powerful poem like *Trivanzah* lamenting the plight of the hungry masses in these words: *Trivanzah trivanzah, khyemav kyah, khyemav kyah*. On the other hand, he could take up an insignificant topic like *Haersath* and drive home a message of unfulfilled aspiration with the help of the symbol of a torn shoe thrown on a wayside.

*Boota kho'rah akh vati pyath pyomut,  
aesa vahrith tsharan tresh,  
hoonah akh aav lamuna ko'rnas,  
phuchi matsi buthi khanji dyutnas phesh,  
dalah dith nyun nail akis kun,  
treshi hatis ma az phut tresh?*

I have had the privilege of meeting Nadim Ji many a time, almost every time I went to Kashmir on a holiday. During my student days also I not only met him quite often but also participated in many Mushairas along with him and many contemporary senior poets. In his later years also I met him at the house of his brother-in-law, J.N. Kaul. In these private meetings and conversations I had the occasions to recite my own poems to him. He was a great listener. He would listen to other poets, young and old, with rapt attention. He would seldom hasten to clap or applaud but whenever he heard some poets recite a truly good piece he would say *Vah Vah* and express his appreciation. He was a source of inspiration for many a young and budding poets. I used to write in Hindi those days and it was at his instance that I switched over to Kashmiri. I know from my own experience with him that he would appreciate musical and melodious compositions written in chaste Kashmiri with a powerful humanistic theme. Since he was associated with the political movement and concerned about scourges of war, exploitation, slavery and subjugation, his initial poems did sometime appear propagandist and bordering on sloganeering, e.g. *Jangbaaz khabardar, Mye chum taza yavun, Ba gyavana az* etc. With the passage of time he matured into a serious poet of great merit and mettle.

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He wrote delicate poems on human emotions and feelings as also values of universal appeal e.g. *Mye chham ash pagahaech*, *dalhanznihund gyevun*, *Lakhchun*, *Baran coat*, *Nabad tyethvyen*, *Adnuk Posh* etc. In either case, however, his compositions were musical, melodious and lyrical. His diction, selection and usage of words and phrases, the flow in his poetry and the smoothness verse after verse, all were superb.

It was perhaps the quality of lyricism in his poetry that prompted Nadim to write his famous operas, particularly because he found this medium very powerful to bring home his message for the emancipation of the downtrodden, spread of love and brotherhood and to strengthen the forces fighting for justice and peace. These operas include *Bomber ta Yamberzal*, *Heemal Naegra*, *Neeki badi*, *Safar ta Shehjar*, *Madanvar ta Zuvalmaal* and many others written for Radio and then staged by various schools and institutions. Lyricism was in his blood perhaps because his soul was attuned to the singing and humming of his mother. He was *Rasa-siddha*, full of music and melody and his compositions are nectar to the ears.

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## NADIM – THE PATH FINDER TO KASHMIRI POESY AND POETICS

*P.N. Kachru*

It was on a late wintery day of 1948 that a gentleman with vague but inquiring expression writ large on his face, dropped in the precincts of National Cultural Front in the Exhibition Grounds in Sinagar. A closely fitted small turban and a long woollen close collared coat with a tight pyjama roused my dandy-natured curiosity. His was a casual visit, perhaps to see his co-professional late Premnath Pardesi, or to have a first hand information about the nature and working of the Cultural Front. I never saw him again as in the month of May 1948, I took the decision to leave the Front in order to make an effort to free my artistic expressions from the shackles of narrow sectarian, political and propaganda sloganism that formed the chief motive of the cultural front, thereby becoming one of the founding members of Progressive Artist's Association that later did play a contributing role in the modern Indian Art movement.

Hardly seven months of my departure and to my shocking surprise, the Cultural Front faced a sudden closure (December 1948) due to embezzlement of funds by its manager. In June 1949 the premises was re-opened and the first meeting, under the changed name of National Cultural Congress, took place under the chairmanship of G.M. Sadiq, the President of the Congress. The delivery of report of embezzlement was submitted and confirmed, and thereafter functioning of Cultural Congress and meetings of its members became regular.

It was here that in one of the weekly meetings of writers I again spotted the gentleman in long coats with the mini-turban as his head gear. His name was Pandit Dina Nath who composed his creations under the pen-name of 'Nadim'. His regular participation in weekly writers' meet familiarized us with each other till, in one of the meetings he unexpectedly brushed off the hallucinatory image of freshly acquired

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freedom about which the population and the intellectual psyche was opiated and was still romanticizing this attainment. Nadim burst out with his “big bang” poem – प्रुछुन छुम. The poem threw a new challenge that became a herald to the struggle against poverty and exploitation, and to the exposure of newly acquired freedom of a handful of leadership. He trumpeted the interrogative riddle –

छरण लोरि कुटनन सरसं ताज रोज्या ?  
अकिस चोर त भ्याख मोहताज रोज्या ?  
म्य कशमीर क्यन ताजदारन प्रुछुण छुम !

The Marxian thinkers and “fellow travellers” who constituted most of the political hierarchy, not to speak of the intelligentsia, particularly most of the writers, poets, dramatists and writers, popularly branded as “progressives” were thrilled with Nadim’s progressive themes. The hard core communists who could hardly be identified, though dominating, from the entire political hierarchy, immediately rallied their support to Nadim’s new theme that expressed the Marxian and real freedom from poverty and class distinction and exploitation. Soon he was heralded proudly into the communist ranks and got himself christened as a strong “fellow traveller”. Braj Behari Kachru in his article on Dina Nath Nadim that appeared in *Naad* (March/April 1997 issue), has clubbed poet Mahjoor with Nadim as a senior “fellow traveller”. This is a wrong statement. I know it fully, I being then a communist member, that poet Mahjoor never joined the ranks. In fact even as a broad political thinker he possessed a mere populist view of the then existing National Conference movement.

Nadim rose over the high pulpit which had put up an ideal façade but it was propped by opportunistic supports vacillating in character and also metamorphic and fluctuating in its essence. The penetrating view of a visionary was the need of the hour who could foresee the tryst with the golden past of poesy adored and ornamented by aesthetes like Anandavardan, Mumatta and Abhinavagupta, that had been left behind in the mists of delusion and obscurity and was faintly oscillating through the superimposed alien imitations. Nadim’s poetic sensibility



and vision could survey the dismal prospect. His was the position of the surveyor whose immediate prospect was riven with imitative cheap degenerative and borrowed *gazel* form that led to a corrupt conglomerate of Persio-Arabic and minor Kashmiri mixture that hardly presented the linguistics of his mother tongue. One could desperately long for, and try to catch hold of a lone example of poesy and poetics that was in the process of obliteration, but was pathetically working through the haze of obscurity. One could dearly reverie on the lonely and unique example of poetic alliteration that could eclipse Thomas Grey's "longing lingering looked behind".

हृदि लोमनम म्य मद्दि न्येन्दरि हृदि  
मछि मछबन्द सँनिथ गोम  
स्वन न्यूनम म्य रद्दि रद्दि  
वुन्यूब करिथ गोम  
वन्त व्यसि वोज कुस कस पदि

or, sound-echoing-sense:

अगन गगन गयि गगरायि  
नब तल नार वुजमल द्रायि

And again, after a long spate of darkness, Nadim's quick-stroke डेम्ब्र नाव paddling rhythm from the vegetable selling belle डल हॉजं.

हय वोलय हय वोलय हय वोलय हय  
फूल वांगन त पॉरिमि अलय हय, हय वोलय हय वोलय हय  
नावि मंज छिय करान ठोल ठोलय हय, हय वोलय हय वोलय हय --

or again, the poet's suggestiveness of the jerks to a loaded carriage through antiphon or through the 'labour dirge' as the poet himself had named it. The selective repetitive and heraldic utterances for sinewy and intensive load dragging is aptly conveyed to our sensitivity through the antiphons of –

या शाहि हमदान, या शाहि हमदान  
अँस्य ति छा इनसान, कँम्य वोन इनसान  
बुथि हा वन्द छुय

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Blend of sound and sense again is aptly impressed in poet's well known poem त्रिवन्जाह, wherein the progression of numerical counting conveys the excruciating and constantly advancing pains of hunger.

The rich Jamavar and brocade of similies, metaphors and analogies bear the character of beatitude, sensitivity of lakeside blues, mysteries of mountain mists and parlance of Kashmiri linguistic purity. His blending of cultural locale and its romantic sensitivity renders Nadim's comparisons and analogies beyond the classical Gupta poet. Out of Nadim's host of the store-house some examples of the superfine are worth the pleasure. In his famous sonnet the suggestive imageries are excruciatingly reflective of the pathos of the people:

दोह अकि कोह पॅत्य जून खॅच चोट हिश  
पोम्पर् पोट हिश रोपयाह खोट हिश

But elsewhere, the introduction of personal note to the content enhances the beauty of reflective pathos and intensive imageries, in yet another sonnet:

म्य वुनि छिम याद त्रेश्वय साज् चॉनी  
अँदर नज़राह, मोदुर आलव, शिहिज कथ  
रँसिज कौँचाह म्य गँयि लोलुच दिहच वथ  
पिशिज पॅच पॉटय रख हिश ज़िन्दगॉनी  
असिथ ज़न ताफ नोन प्यव ब्रॉरिकॉनी  
वसिथ ज़न खोर कोड हरदन हना पथ  
च्य वोश त्रोवुथ दिलन कँड वोठ गँयस सथ

यिमय केन्ह ताप टेचि कौँइनात म्यॉनी  
नतय बुति हावसाह अख आवुस्योमुत  
तुरुन साज़ाह ज़रब ख्यथ छस वुशिन लय  
छेतेमुच्च शोख तस्वीरच जवॉनी  
मँछिल यावुन स्यठाह प्यय प्यय बुल्योमुत  
थँकिथ लूसिथ थवान रछ रछ पॅतिम शय  
यि सोन्ज़ल आसिमा पोत छाय चॉनी

The popular metaphors render a cleansing insight into the simplistic expressions from lakeside society -

डेम्ब गोगजाह ज़न वोज़ज बीब खोतन  
छोत वाट मुज ह्युह  
नस्ति पिपिज  
रेम्प् बुथ

In his *Son Wattan* the imagery of poesy has reached to its superfine and sensitive expressions. These imageries invoke and then incite our cultural sensibilities and their simplicities:

सोन वतन पोश ह्युह  
लोल न्यायन हुन्द शिहुँल सरपोश ह्युह  
बाल पानुक यार ह्युह  
यावनच गिन्द बाशि ह्युह  
डल देहिस प्यठ शाम ह्युह  
माजि हुन्द मोम दाम ह्युह  
तोस अन्ज़ल्य दार ह्युह

Nadim's path breaking 'big bang' broke in when he introduced free verse, modern sonnet form, traditional couplet and *Vaakh* form stringed with typical Kashmiri terminology, while clearing the alien soot from countenance of Vageshwari – the goddess of speech. He heralded in with mesmerizing awe and hypnotic suspense to those who listened breathtakingly:

बु ग्यवन अज ति क्याजि अज छु जंगबाज जालसाज कँशीरि  
म्यानि जाग ह्यथ,  
ति क्याजि ति क्याजि अज  
बेवायि जायि जायि करन छि आयि ग्रायि, युथ चलन यि म्योन  
बाग ह्यथ

The new form in our poetry revolutionized and widened horizons of poesy as against the hackneyed and imitative tracings. The literati and poets were not only influenced but also got inspired to adopt the style. No doubt most of them adopted a copyist method as it needed the gene of a genius to assimilate the poetic form, its stance and formal fluidity. Initially poets like Rahi and Santosh tried to become the duplicators of the poet's new form.

The political themes which, in almost all cases reduced the Kashmiri poetry to mere sloganism and propaganda, but in case of Nadim he heralded in with the noblest and path-breaking forms of poesy into the literature.

The culmination of Nadim's free verse form appears yet in his interpretative composition titled जलरि जॉज. The aesthetic sense for the picturesque in poetry, the creative pathos and the pathetic fallacy are masterly writ large on the countenance of this composition. The sense for the expression of interpretative personal locale, the graphic and miniaturist rendering of excruciating experience in his locale that visibly exposed the human surrounding along with its social psyche; and all that turns into the chocking situation that gasps for a favourable relief.

Nadim is the only aesthete poet who could dive deep into the unique contribution made by the great 9<sup>th</sup> century Kashmirian aesthete Anandavardhan. His well-known treatise *Dhvanyaloka* projects the linguistics not in the conventional but in manifestive sense. His semantics in poetry is applicable, not literally, but imaginatively which is implicit in communication. He pleads that poetry cannot be rendered precise until it can mark off the boundaries of poetic language from the other uses of language. The semantics becomes questionable when utilized into the realm of poetry. In the scientific sense use of language is well within the reach of everyone who knows the language; but in artistic and poetic sense the meaning may be metaphoric or implicit. Even the freedom to the extent of impreciseness becomes the essence of poetic usage; or, in Anandavardhan's parlance, the unique function of language becomes *Dhwani* – the nearest possible, but not exact translation – 'suggestive' over and above the well-known functions as denotation and indication. The language here does not convey the meaning but the "other". *Dhvanlokalocana*, a commentary by Abhinavagupta, relates "that the word is simply an instrument of information. Once it has been perceived, has no further usefulness". "The poetic word on the contrary is an end in itself, and once read and tasted, loses nothing of its intrinsic value, but remains, as it were, virgin and intact. It, on the other hand sharpens the aesthetic sensibility and, therefore, the consciousness".

Nadim has coronated the Kashmiri poesy with a golden plume of this “poetic word” that aptly reflects the effulgence of Anandavardhan’s “suggestivity”, and conveys that which is beyond the expression and denotation. Out of this stockpile only a few lines may be put down for an example of the beauty of the “poetic word”:

सीन् वोगन्योमुत शबाबस, अश्क सर खम क्याह वनै !  
हब् खोतन द्रायि आबस, पादशाहम क्याह वनै !  
दॉर अडवैछ गॅयि निकाबस, कोकुलन खम क्याह वनै !  
चश्मि तर प्रारान जवाबस, लॉव्य बाउम क्याह वनै !  
तार छेज शायद रबाबस, कुकिलि गव ज़म क्याह वनै !  
प्येय वैथर वैस्य वैस्य गुलाबस, नज़रि आदम क्याह वनै !  
नॉदिमन खुम खोर आबस, च्यन यि कम कम क्याह वनै !

While ignoring the scientific meaning of denotation of वनि क्याह the poet has masterly wielded its metaphoric and implicit expression, with which he tries to open up the mystic windows of consciousness to probe within that beauty which is inexplicable and indescribable.

The poet’s reintroduction of *Vaakh* and couplet form enriched its craft of brevity, lexical selectiveness and cohesion and use of appropriate vocabulary to enrich the imagery. Contentwise though Nadim divorced himself from the spiritual philosophy of Lal Ded, but instead infused it with his rich experiences with his humble and down-trodden life and locale. But with all this change, the sequence of imaginaries and events usually led to a stage where-from a sensitive mind could enter into an ‘other’ of the limitedness. The careful perusal of the composition hereunder will lead to this conclusion:

ऑन खॅन्डाह अख अडगॅर मडगॅर  
छोट् डेरस प्यठ त्रावान गाह ।  
गावाह अख पॅच मुधयाह क्रनस  
हून्याह अख पॅच ध्युतनस हाह ॥  
मचि अकि तुज थॉवन ज़चि तरि पुशरिथ ।  
अमि ओर कुन कुस वनि क्याह ? ॥॥

Besides, observer’s penetrating eye and personal imagery has woven and transformed the despicable into the highest form of beauty

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that is, from painter's point of view, abstract in form that has led one from mundane to the ideal. That is how search for means of expression gives in its turn birth to aesthetic form as well.

While analysing the despicable locale of the above composition, I am reminded of a historic dialogue between two great post-impressionist painters, Van Gogh and Gauguin. Once during their days in Arles in south of Europe, while commenting on a drawing of an old wrinkled and ugly face of a woman done by Gauguin, Van Gogh appreciatingly commented that "to me the sketch is beautiful, as ugliness is the highest kind of beauty". I am at once reminded of having seen, now a multi-million dollar worth, the painting of his own shoes done by Van Gogh himself. A rugged, worn and full of sharp angularities, projecting and palsied appearance – and in general, of a misshapen mass. In short, a pathetic appearance of social injustice, disregard and ridicule to the genius of the age. Likewise here is another socio-cultural comment through the worn out shoe lying in a pathway:

बूट खोराह अख वति प्यठ प्योमुत  
ऑसाह वैहरिथ छांडान त्रेश ॥  
हूनाह अख आव लमनाह कोरनस  
थच्चिमचि बुथ्य खन्जि ध्युतनस फेश ॥  
डालाह दिथ न्यून नालि अकिस मन्ज  
त्रेशि हँतिस ध्यव फुटि अज त्रेश ॥

The pathos of a worn out and cast away shoe-in all a priceless commentary and satire on human injustice ventilated through the noblest of the form created by the pathfinder named Nadim. Nay, not only the path-finder but he stood rooted on that path and grew into a stalwart amongst pigmies. He is aptly portrayed through his own words:

शिहुल कुलाह अजीम ज्यूठ तु ज्युठ जन छु जद पनुन  
वसीह तु बागि—बोरुत रॉयिलाह बुलन्द कद पनुन  
वुमुर त् वॉन्स बे हिसाब.....  
थज्र बजर ति लाजवाब.....  
जमीन अथ छु गोड त् आसमान अथ छु हद पनुन  
शिहुल कुलाह छु जद पनुन.....

Nadim's ancestral home was in Sheshiyar, Habba Kadal in the nearby vicinity of the bridge, having been firstly built during medieval times after the name of the poetess queen Habba Khatoon, whose residential palace is supposed to have been situated, on the bank of Vitasta across and opposite that of Nadim's house. Till recently the bank, where the place stood, was popularly known as Bala-Yarabal.

Nadim was born on 18<sup>th</sup> March 1916. At the tender age of eight years he lost his father, Shankar Kaul, and was left to the care of his mother Sokha Mal, whom Nadim with his affection called स्वन्दर घ्यद who hailed from village Muran. She had to labour, through her life, on the spinning wheel (रँधुर) to bring up orphaned Dina Nath and also educate him.

In order to supplement his mother's meagre laboured earnings, Dina Nath had to earn through petty tuitions even before he could pass his Matriculation in the year 1929 from Government High School of Bagh-i-Dilawar Khan. For trying to meet two ends of his life, he launched the "City Academy" in 1934 where he would try to earn through petty tuitions. In 1937 he joined New Era High School as a teacher, but shortly after three years gave up to establish the Hindu High School in the year 1940. The same year he graduated from Punjab University, and later in 1945 he did his B.T., the bachelor's degree in education. The years between 1938 and 1940 were decisive in formulating his political views, which were deeply influenced by Bhagat Singh, the revolutionary hero. It was in the year 1938 when Nadim organized his first public meeting supporting the demand for responsible government, after which his house was searched, all his collections of Urdu poems confiscated and he was jailed for three months.

In the year 1940 his Urdu poetry occasionally appeared in the *Pratap*, the college magazine of S.P. College, Srinagar; and in that very year his first Kashmiri poem मॉज कॅशीर appeared in the S.P. College magazine as well, after which he never wrote in Kashmiri till the year 1946. In 1948 again, a poem in Kashmiri appeared in S.P. College magazine through the efforts of Prof. S.K. Toshkhani. This poem also

was in praise of his motherland *Kasheer*, which opened with the lines:

जगथ ज़ननी बवॉनी मॉज पननी  
दिमय मीठय पादनय माता नमस्ते,  
हलम बॅरि बॅरि छि मोखतुकि वावमालन  
थवान फिर् फिर् छि यिम चान्यन गुलालन,  
वुज़ान छुय नागरादन पोत्र कोताह,  
स्यन्दन आरन कोलन दोद् वोत्र कोताह

.....  
दयस आव न्यँनदरि मंज स्वोपनाह मनस मंज  
वुछिन अख अपसरा न्यशबोद वनस मंज  
यि डीशिथ आव असुन तस द्रायि वुजँमल  
संगर मालन खँटिथ रुज छायि तल तल ।  
यहय वुजँमल तिहन्दि मोख याम द्राये  
बॅनिथ कश्मीर दीवी पानँ आये ।

Nadim's emotional invocation as 'Dear Mother' (मॉज पनुनी) is dearly connected with his deep affections for his mother who tended and nursed him singly from the tender age of eight years. As claimed by the poet himself, his muse of song and poetry remained poised in his mother's musical undertones which became audible to ease out the spine breaking labours on her spinning wheel. Till the concluding days of his life Nadim's poesy flowed from this source who always heard those echoes of

मनकुय म्य गिलिटूर चूरि चोल, मति सोन्तु वन्तम कोनु फोल  
कमि शॉयि रुदुम छायि हॉल, कवुज़ानु कॅम्यसंजि मायि वोल  
क्याहताम छु गोमुत बुलबुलन

Besides being a poet Nadim had a thick cluster of plumes in his headgear. By profession being a pedagogue he envisioned, besides his classroom teaching, a broad arena for wherein an extensive drive for education could be floated. So, as back as in the year 1943 he was responsible for sponsoring the establishment of a chain of educational institutional units like Gandhi Memorial College in Srinagar; and Lal Ded Memorial Higher Secondary School of which he remained the Principal from 1963 to 1965, but resumed the job again in 1969. He organised



***P.N. Kachru***

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the teachers of the State and founded All Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh Teachers Association and became its first President. This position led him to occupy his seat in the State Legislative Council.

He became an active participant in the World Peace Movement, and became one of the founding members and General Secretary of the J&K State Peace Council in the year 1950. He successively represented his State in Indian Peace Conference in 1951 and 1952; and also toured China as a delegate with All India Peace Council. He was also awarded the Soviet Land Nehru Award in 1971 and was invited for a tour to Russia.

His effective and concerted literary activity began with the re-christening of the National Cultural Front into the National Cultural Congress in the early 1949. He became the General Secretary of the Progressive Writers Association which constituted one of the units of the National Cultural Congress. The first organ of the Congress *Kong Posh* was edited by Nadim between 1949 and 1957.

In New Delhi he was honoured with Kalhana award for literature in 1984. He became the member of the National Federation of Progressive Writers in 1986; and earned his Sahitya Akademi Award in 1985.

His unique contribution to Kashmiri literature were his musical operas which added a new dimension, not only to poetic structure, but to the simplistic and open-air folk theatricals which were till then only popular amongst the village-side populace. Thus Nadim brought tradition over to the regular stage, and also equipped it with the theatre craft and orchestral dimensions and instrumentations. *Bombur-Yamberzal* based on the eternal love between *Bombur*, the male bumble bee and *Yamberzal*, the maid narcissus who piningly awaits for her lover till she withers away when the male bumble comes to meet his beloved. Thus the lovers being in eternal quest for each other, can never meet, the former being the late-spring visitor while the later being the early-spring visitor to the garden.

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The author's plot emerges from his plan to establish the new tradition to make a tryst for these traditional lovers. The plot is laid in collaboration with the other floral inmates and the songster birds of the garden. The anti-love and anti-life reaction ensues from the villainous characters of Autumn and Toofan who get vanquished in the struggle and thus peace and love is established in the garden. The opera which was staged in 1953 in Srinagar, got an international exposition over the Russian theatre after the opera was witnessed by Russian leaders, Marshal Bulganin and Khrushchev on their visit to Kashmir in 1955. However, it would not be out of place here to say that the then Russian author and publisher Sharaf Rashidov and M/s Gafur Gulyam Literature and Art Publishers, Tashkent, had the cheek to do an act of plagiarism brazen-facedly by publishing it in Russian in 1983 under the title 'Song of Kashmir'. The other operas he wrote, composed and staged are:

नीकी बदी, शिहुल कुल, ज़ोलमाल त् मदनवार, व्यतस्ता  
and हीमाल नॉंगराय

Nadim was the first to write a short story जवॉबी कार्ड in Kashmiri. He was the only poet who introduced sonnet form. He introduced free verse, opera, sound and light compositions and gilted them with his phenomenal lexical repertoire, controlled phonetics and breath taking imagery. Not only that, he coined new words, revived traditional Kashmiri linguistic stock, created new imageries and symbols. He extricated and excavated words, scanned and chiselled them, and then with those he brocaded his similies and compositions. In short, it is Nadim who brought Kashmiri literature in the international arena.

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**D.N. KAUL ‘NADIM’  
IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE**

*M.L. Raina*

**BACKGROUND**

Every individual has a past, which informs his present and translates it in his future. Kashmiri Pandits have a long history of suffering. During 486 years of Muslim rule (AD 1340 - AD 1826) the zealot rulers and their cronies inflicted untold miseries on them. “Bulk of their population was prostrated and their literary treasures, art, artefacts, temples and houses vandalised, put to fire, or consigned to rivers.” Brief interludes of peace during this period, were usually followed by ruthless bigots. Some Pandits who prized their faith and culture continued to live a miserable existence either by paying *Jazia*, living in disguise or providing their expertise to the masters. The only strength the Pandit (who refused to get converted) had, in that bleak period of Kashmir’s history, was faith in his cultural roots.

Kashmiri Pandits are inheritors of great cultural past. “There was scarcely any branch of knowledge which their ancestors had not studied. In philosophy, religion, linguistics, literature, astronomy, engineering or medicine, their progress was striking enough even for the modern age.” Another prominent historian Dr. K.M. Ashraf says, “Kashmir occupies a place of pride in almost all walks of learning. In pre-Muslim period it contributed significantly to linguistics, literature, philosophy, aesthetics, art and architecture. Even though a lot has been lost, yet the little that has been salvaged, places Kashmir on par with highly cultured places of the world.”

Nadim Sahib, was inheritor to this glorious past. He had, Kayatta and Momatta, Ratnakar and Ksemendera, Bilhana and Somdeva, Utpala and Abhinav Gupta, Kalhana and Jona Raja, Shiti Kant and Shrivara, Rupa Bhavani and Habba Khatoon, Lalleshwari and Nund

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Reshi, Parmanand and Arnimal, Gani and Krishenjoo Razdan, Swachha Kral, Mahmud Gani and Shams Faqir, and last but not the last mastaana and Masterji, Mahjoor and Azad as beacon lights to blaze his path. And, true to the tradition Nadim illuminated the modern period.

Born in a lower middle class family, living at subsistence level, Nadim grew in a Kashmir, where poverty, death, disease, hunger, squalor and penury prevailed all round. The community to which he belonged by and large lived at bare subsistence level, crawling for good health, good education and gainful employment. Being self-respecting, "they would conceal poverty trying to make his/her figure presentable much more than his narrow circumstances permit." Further, having a tradition of learning, he would prioritize education to many other needs. Under these conditions Nadim's great mother burnt midnight oil to ply the spinning wheel, to produce enough wool for sale to educate and sustain Nadim in his earlier years. He was a student of Babapora Elementary School and later on joined Government High School, Bagh-i-Dilawar Khan. During high school years, young Nadim started giving tuitions to his juniors, to make life a bit easier for his mother. One of his classmates in the high school was Mirza Ghulam Hassan Beg, popularly known as Mirza Arif, a scientist, a great lover of Kashmiri language and a poet. In 1929, having done matriculation, he joined the only college in the Kashmir valley, S.P. College. But he had to give up the college to concentrate on private tuitions. In the absence of jobs for educated Kashmiris, he joined a private school in 1934 and later in 1937, joined New Era School that was opened by a few prominent Kashmiri Pandits who were all graduates or post-graduates. Later on, he along with some socially committed Kashmiri Pandits, established a Hindu Educational Society, with the main purpose of educating the Kashmiris. When a Hindu High School was established in 1939, Nadim joined the school and simultaneously graduated as a private candidate from the Punjab University in 1940 apart from taking his Teacher's Training Degree from the same University in 1943. Because of his efforts Hindu Educational Society opened a few elementary schools in various parts of the city, where educational facilities did not exist. Being fond of music, he persuaded a

### ***M.L. Raina***

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great musician Jager Nath Shivpuri (then unemployed) to open a musical institute to train young boys and girls in classical music. This musical institute was responsible for training hundreds of Kashmiris, and its alumni later on joined various colleges and schools, when music was introduced in college and school curriculum.

Nadim, deeply moved by the prevailing poverty and lack of opportunities in Kashmir, could not keep himself away from the political trends in India. He would attend all intellectual discussions and discourses (that he could come to know of) held in Srinagar. As all youngmen of that era, he was deeply influenced by the heroic stand of Bhagat Singh and his colleagues. He also took keen interest in the political developments that were taking place in Kashmir and the world over. In 1937, a students conference was held in Kashmir, which was presided over by Dr. K.M. Ashraf, the then Secretary of the Indian National Congress. Subash Chander Bose had sent a message to the conference. Late Prof. Mohd. Sultan Want and J.P. Raina were the main organisers of the conference – Want being the Vice-President and Raina General Secretary. Nadim attended the conference and even read a poem of his own. He also took part in the National Demand Movement, where in nearly a hundred Kashmiri Pandits took part and some of them were even imprisoned. In this struggle Nadim came into contact with Late Justice Jia Lal Kelam, Prem Nath Bazaz, Kashyap Bandhu, Dr. Peshin, Shyam Lal Saraf, Prem Nath Dhar and a host of other forward looking young Pandits, whose main demands included elected representatives to the legislature, a responsible government, and freedom of press and platform. From 1938 onwards Nadim had been supporting nationalist forces in Kashmir.

In 1946, National Conference launched Quit Kashmir movement. Again nearly 150 non-Muslims were arrested. A large section of liberal Pandits, who did not go to Jail, worked for the National Conference, overtly and covertly. As many as eight Pandit lawyers were on the legal aid committee of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah. Young Pandits produced literature, posters, booklets for the movement and many of them worked underground. A Hindu Nav Jawan Sangh was floated,

under the directions of the National Conference and Presidentship of Dr. S.N. Peshin, to popularise the nationalist cause and contest the government-sponsored election in 1947. Nadim was a great sympathiser of the movement and so he did a lot of work for it. During this period he also came into contact with many young communists and socialists and started gravitating towards leftist ideology.

### **POST-1947**

The year 1947, was a watershed in the history of sub-continent. India was partitioned and Pakistan was carved out of it. The Princely states were asked by the British rulers to join one of the dominions. "The State of Jammu, Kashmir, Ladakh, Baltistan..." was ruled by Maharaja Hari Singh. He had incarcerated the leadership of National Conference and Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and hundreds of National Conference activists were in Jail, on the day (i.e. 14/15 August 1947) when India and Pakistan became independent. The movement of National Conference was supported by the Indian National Congress, communists, socialists and some liberals. But Jinnah and his Muslim League opposed the movement. The people of the State in general and Kashmiri majority in particular were supportive of Sheikh Abdullah and the movement. Having achieved the goal of Pakistan because of British patronage, Jinnah thought Kashmir would be delivered to him. He, in his arrogance, did not condescend to enter into negotiations with the popular Kashmiri leadership or the Maharaja. On the other hand right from early August, he asked his party Chief Minister in NWFP-Qayum Khan to organise a surprise attack on the State. After having attacked and annexed some parts of Jammu region of the State, Pakistan launched an attack on Kashmir on 22 October 1947. As many Muslim soldiers deserted Maharaja's army, it could not on its own meet the Pakistani aggression and the Maharaja asked for accession of his State to India, so that Indian army could come to the defence of Kashmir. Meanwhile Pakistani tribal marauders, assisted by Pakistani army entered northern Kashmir, pillaging village after village, town after town, indulging in loot, murder and rape. After accepting the instrument of accession signed by the Maharaja of Kashmir, Indian army started landing in Kashmir on 26 October 1947.

The uncalled invasion was a traumatic experience. The National Conference leadership and all progressive sections of society, without batting an eyelid came out on the streets of Kashmir in defiance of the invaders. A People's Militia was organised and People's Committees formed to fight the enemy and maintain peace and order. This brutal aggression rattled the sensitive souls of Kashmir, and, almost all poets, artists, writers, stage actors, musicians, both young and old came forward to contribute their mite to save their beloved land. Some of the young men of People's Militia like Som Nath Bera and Pushkar Nath Zadu lost their lives in the battle field. Maqbool Sherwani fell in the trap of the raiders and was cruelly put to death.

Several poets strated writing about the brave deeds of the matyrs, about the National Conference flag, about unity and about defeating the enemy. A cultural front was organised. Young artists thought of a new dawn. A new fervour gripped a new generation of poets who looked at new horizons and sincerely believed that they were the makers of new destiny. The two most important things that followed invasion were the formation of people's government and collapse of the feudal system. The new government passed on the land of absentee landlords to the tillers and freed the peasants and workers from the debt trap of usurers and *waddars*. All these reforms instilled new hopes and a new progressive thought began to be generated. Dina Nath Nadim, Rahman Rahi, Amin Kamil, Mahinder Raina, Aziz Haroon, Pardesi and many others took to new idiom, as old symbols and semilies were not in tune with the new revolutionary scenario. A booklet *Gaye Ja Kashmir* (Kashmir Sing On) was published. It had martial songs based on poems for unity, poems against exploitation, against raiders, conspirators and such other themes.

In 1949, National Cultural Congress was formed with D.N. Nadim as its Secretary. He had started writing in his own mother tongue right from 1946, on the cajoling of Mirza Arif. Kashmiri language, he found, was an appropriate vehicle to satiate his inner thirst. He rid the poetic language of Sanskrit and Persian content words (not in everyday use) and used Kashmiri words which the litterateurs had started

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discarding but were used by Nund Reshi, Lal Ded and many other poets of yore and were spoken in the villages. A Progressive Writers Association of J&K was also formed with Nadim as its General Secretary. In 1949, he came into close contact with Comrade Dhanwantary, a legendary freedom fighter (released from jail in 1947 after 15 years) and was greatly influenced by his honesty, dedication and erudite scholarship. It was Dhanwantary who asked Nadim to become a full-fledged party member of the CPI. He became member of the CPI in 1950. "The political revolution and the progressive movement were only an answer to his soul's quest and not the cause of his education or conversion." Nadim and Arif were on the editorial board of the *Kong Posh* started in 1949 by the Cultural Congress, with Mahjoor as its editor. This was a popular journal, and almost every issue of it carried some thing from Nadim – opinion, poem, article or editorial. One could see the literary prowess of Nadim, even in the Kashmiri prose he wrote in the *Kong Posh*. Unfortunately this publication ceased to exist just after five years.

Nadim had no ego problems. He was a missionary and would invite all young artists to participate in the deliberations of the Congress. He would always had a word of encouragement for them. He persuaded Arjan Dev Majboor to attend the meetings of the Congress. He was fond of Moti Lal Saqi, Rahi, Kundan and budding young poets and writers. With the Abdullah government in saddle after 1950 elections to the legislature, the high hopes which the people had from them about a just and transparent governance, remained illusive. Year after year disillusionment grew. The euphoria of the literary sections was on wane now. The lower echelons of the National Conference at the tehsil and block levels also started indulging in corrupt practices. The protests by most party activists were taken as affront by the leadership. It created a sort of revulsion. And poets like Mahjoor, Asi, Nadim started expressing disgust through their poems.

The leftist section of the National Conference, started organising, Kisan rallies and peace conferences. Most of these rallies and peace conferences were attended by Nadim. And, as a rule he used to recite



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his poems that galvanised the people. The most active members of the peace council were Nadim, Rahman Rahi, A.G. Namtahali, Reshi Dev, Moti Lal Misri, Karihuloo, Abdul Kabir, Mir Lasjan. During this time Nadim wrote some of his great poems, which are even today remembered by the people.

In 1952, Nadim was elected General Secretary of the Peace Council. This was a period when the Anglo-US block was applying pressure on India on the Kashmir issue. Within Kashmir, tumultuous changes took place in the year 1953. Dissensions had developed within the National Conference. Sadiq, Bakshi and others openly accused Shiekh Abdullah of breach of faith. The situation worsened and Abdullah was dismissed and put behind bars. Communist Party of India, whole heartedly supported the dismissal of Abdullah, accusing him of being an agent of Anglo-American block. Nadim and progressive group of writers genuinely believed in the Anglo-American conspiracy theory. During the period 1954-1960 Nadim devoted most of his time to teaching and organising teachers. Many poets, artists, stage artists and others took up government jobs. Some even came out of the fold of progressive writers. Nadim continued with determination – possibly humming *Me cham aash pagehich, pagah sholey duniya*.

As a teacher Nadim was knowledgeable and very well read. He had command over all school subjects and taught english, history, sciences from time to time. The teachers of Hindu High School and Lal Ded school recall that Nadim would always be prepared to take the class of an absentee teacher. He was cool and considerate and had seldom any problem with his colleagues. As Head Master or Principal of the school he led the school staff and made their presence felt in the comity of city Schools. Innumerable times Lal Ded Memorial School students were adjudged first in cultural shows and co-curricular activities. As a teacher he was conscious of the hard life and problems of the teachers. Therefore, he strated contacting government school teachers and was able to organise first Kashmir Teachers' Association. In his first address to the association, he emphasised the values of unity, courage and struggle. His advice to the teachers was that “doing your

job with devotion and sincerity, obliges you to fight for your right to better and comfortable life". He was elected President of the Association and was able to get the grades of the teachers changed for the better. Many stalwart teachers in this organisation such as Ghulam Rasul Azad, Poshkar Nath Bhat, Arjan Dev, Munshi Jaffer, Abdul Ahad, occupied important offices.

An important political development in Kashmir of late fifties was the growing chasm between Bakshi Gulam Mohammad and his brand and Sadiq and his cohorts. As the situation was, Prime Minister Bakshi had made Sadiq, D.P. Dhar and Mir Qasim ineffective as Ministers. The communists and many liberals were also not happy with the high handedness of Bakshi and his firebrand followers. In order to reduce the influence of communists and Sadiq, Bakshi had overtly and covertly supported the establishment of parallel cultural, intellectual, labour and teacher organisations. Most of these organisations were put forth by enticing the communists or progressives. Nadim was so deeply stung by this situation that he had to directly castigate his comrades for betraying their cherished ideals. In his own words: "Pawn your tongue and sell your speech, sell all that is lying waste."

or in the poem: "*Huti Nazraana Dolaan Dyarr Matyo*"  
(Mamon lover) the gift bags are dangling there.

In 1957, elections were held to two teachers constituencies, one each for Kashmir-Ladakh region and Jammu region. The Teachers Association put Nadim for Kashmir and G.R. Azad for Jammu. Kashmir had majority of Muslim teachers, while Jammu had majority of Hindu teachers. To defeat these supposedly anti-establishment candidates, the power brokers put up a Muslim, Mubarak Shah from Kashmir and Gupta from Jammu. However, every attempt to defeat the Association's candidates Nadim and Azad failed. Even though in one of the ballot boxes in Sopore for Nadim had only a chicken feather in it, yet the overwhelming support he received from all areas in the valley got him through. A reception was held in honour of successful candidates in the valley at Srinagar, which was attended by nearly 4,000 teachers. Nadim, a successful legislator now, by all humility,

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thanked the teachers, and asked the opponents to join the parent organisation to solve the problems of the teachers. Later in the same year in winter at a poetic symposium in Jammu, in the presence of Prime Minister Bakshi, he recited the famous poem – A Satire

*Khawja Mohmud Banyov Nawab* (Khwaja Mahmud is now a Nawab), *Magar Moma Rooz Momai* (But Moma remains the same Moma), *yath pratschi dim jawab* (Can you solve this riddle) *Chav me Jame Jam* (Pour me a cup of wine.)

The year 1958, saw a group within the National Conference, supported by the communists and liberals of the State, breaking with Bakshi and floating democratic National Conference. This organisation did play key role in organising the people against mal-administration and corruption. Nadim was an active participant in the people's struggles and had to suffer physical and other problems during those days. Yet, he thought that people--leaders and workers would stand up to all repressive measures and provide the State with a good democratic alternative. But, it did not happen. Within months many important persons left the organisation for greener pastures. Leadership also got cold feet and they were back in the lap of Bakshi Sahib. The tallest among them was Sadiq who described it as home coming and said, "in the leadership and capabilities of Bakshi Abdul Rashid he has full faith."

Again Nadim and many honest people were betrayed. Instead of improving the state of affairs, it further deteriorated. Nadim started losing faith. He continued to be a legislator upto 1963. Azad was appointed as Deputy Director of Education in Jammu after completing his term. Nadim continued to attend Lal Ded School upto 1965. Besides, he was also a member of J & K Academy of Art, Culture and Language from 1960 onwards. But he could not continue as the President of Teachers' Association, because of dissensions in the organisation. Sadiq became Prime Minister (later on Chief Minister) in 1963. Kashmiri Pandit teachers who were superseded by their juniors had hoped that Sadiq having a progressive outlook might hand out justice to them. Instead he asked them to approach the court. The court

case took a few years but finally Supreme Court held all the appointments of Headmasters, who had superseded their seniors, as unconstitutional. Sadiq's cohorts created a rumpus and communal overtones were given to legally untenable promotions. In Sopore, a teacher communalised the situation to such an extent that a petitioner T.N. Tiku was attacked and his home ransacked. He had to leave the Sopore town and seek refuge anonymously in Srinagar. All these developments created despondency. And, Nadim found himself left alone. His pleadings with the authorities and ministers went in vain. In disgust he resigned from Teachers' Association and from all political activities. In 1965, Sadiq and many of his well wishers (Miss Mehmuda Sajada Zamir) persuaded him to join the government. He was appointed as Assistant Director (Social Education). There also he felt ill at ease. The official work, babudom, red tape, bureaucratic ball-game were not his forte. He trusted people and sadly found the trust betrayed. Finally, having his cup of sorrow full, in dealing with unscrupulous bureaucratic big wigs he resigned from the job in 1969. He could not toll away his time and finally took to his first love-teaching and joined Lal Ded Memorial H.S. School as Principal. He retired from the school in 1977.

During his active career Nadim served from time to time as member of Scripts Committee, J & K Cultural Academy; member, Advisory Board, Radio Kashmir and member of the State Educational Officers Conference. In seventies he was President of the Kashur Markaz, Srinagar and also as the Kashmiri language expert at the UPSC. Nadim was awarded Soviet Land Nehru Award for his contribution to literature in 1971. His great opera *Bombur Yamberzal* was translated by a Soviet litterateur and was enacted there. He received first Kalhana award in 1985 and Sahitya Academy Award in 1986. The Sharda Samman was given to him (post-humously) which was received by his son at the International Kashmiri Pandit Conference held in Delhi in 1993.

Nadim contributed to theatre in Kashmir in a big way. Earlier Prem Nath Pardesi's play on the martyrdom of Maqbool Sherwani with

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songs written by Mahjoor, Ali Mohd. Lone's play *Viz Chhe Sanny* (Time is ours), Noor Mohd. Roshan's play *Son Sansaar* and Amin Kamil's *Pagah Chhu Gashuur* were staged. Nadim's first musical play was about land to tillers, enacted by the drama unit of cultural front. His second play was *vaavau vonnam* again staged by the drama unit of Cultural Congress, which was also staged in Nanking, China. In the production of these plays, main organisers were Moti Lal Kemmu (the famous dramatist), Kashi Nath Bhan (artist), Noor Mohammad Roshan and Mohan Lal Aima.

Then came the time of operas. Since 1953 onwards, Nadim wrote *Bazzlebee* and *Narcissus*, followed by *Good and evil* and *Hemal Nagrai* in collaboration with N.M. Roshan and in 1977 he wrote a full scale opera *Vitasta* (river Jhelum). Other plays he wrote were *Shihil Kul* staged by girl students of Women's College, Srinagar and *Safar ta Shahijar* was staged by Mallinson School students. It was earlier recited with actions by the College of Education students. Finally came musical dramas like *Madanvaar ta zuvalmal*, written for Radio Kashmir. These operas and musical dramas have enriched Kashmiri language and literature and also given fillip to theatre movement in Kashmir. A few theatre groups were also established who did stage many plays of Lone, Kamil, Makhan Lal Mastana and others.

The poetry and literary as well as cultural efforts of Nadim cannot be described by a layman like me. I would, therefore, with apologies quote Prof. J.N. Raina from his book on Dina Nath Nadim: "Nadim is beyond doubt a master of language, the language of poetry with his immaculate choice of words". Quoting Mohd. Yusuf Teng: "He churned the ocean of language and brought out a huge treasure of astounding words and epithets.... The Alladin of expression was obediently attending on him." Quoting G.R. Santosh, "Most writers of the progressive group were not genuinely progressive but only as much inspired as the slogan shouting participants. He alone after his appearance in 1946 roared like a lion, like a thundering waterfall, moving forward, 'with his red and warm blood' 'refusing to sing' 'getting signature on a peace appeal', lamenting 'the death of a

comrade' and championing the cause of the worker and the peasant.... His experiments, inspired me to write *Raath* (Night). His *Lakhchi chu lakhchun* (The mole of lakchi), made me write *Vyas Myaany Noorah* (Noori my friend), his *Nabad to Tethavyan* (The sweet and bitter) made Rahi to come out with *Takhleeq* (Creation). Rahi himself says, "His poetry sweeps us off our feet." And when Mahjoor was asked, who would succeed him, he pointed his finger and said, "That man wearing an *achkan*".

Prof. Raina further says, "The most significant poet of the period is Dina Nath Nadim. In fact it wouldn't be wrong to call this period the age of Nadim." Many firsts are to his credit. He was first to "experiment with free verse-blank verse, though he retained the rhyme." He was first to "introduce the sonnet, both in the Betrarchan and Shakespearan forms." He was first to write operas in chaste Kashmiri, with only Kashmiri symbolism. He was first to write snippets. With all this to his credit, he influenced his contemporaries and all budding younger poets. And, even upto this day nobody has equalled him in imagery. Prof. S.L. Sadhu says, "It is difficult to say which is more beautiful – a scene in nature or its portrayal by Nadim." It'll not be out of place to quote his talented poet critic son, Shantiveer. He says, "The one person who can be singled out for the range and profound nature of his contribution to the making of literary resurgence is Dina Nath Nadim.... He brought about a sea change in the form and content of Kashmiri literature... that historically speaking, his name is practically synonymous with the factum of contemporary Kashmiri literature. In that sense he can truly be termed as man of destiny."

Nadim was not only praised in Kashmir, but prominent poets and literary critics had a high opinion of him. Bachchan, who translated two of his poems into Hindi said, it was an honour to acknowledge his greatness. Prabhakar Machwe said, "Nadim had the same eminence as Mayakovsky (Russian), Kazi Nazul Islam (Bengali), Shri Shri (Telegu), Pablo Naruda (Spanish), Josh and Faiz (Urdu) and Nirala (Hindi)."

To me, Nadim's work is for all times. His poems (even the propagandist ones) have an abiding relevance. In reality he uplifted the political message to the realm of sublimity and like Faiz bestowed eternity to the message. How relevant even today is *Bu gyavavna az*, and its relevance would be there till war, insurgency and armed conflict continue in the world.

To conclude, Nadim was essentially a teacher, a person with a message. He was innovative - an essential qualification of a good teacher. He was devoted and dedicated. That is why he brought life to his great poetry. He was lover of humanity, who wanted a social order bereft of hypocrisy, chicanery, bigotry, inequality and jealousy. Over and above all Nadim was a Kashmiri, who inherited its thousands of year old culture, who loved its language, its rivers and lakes, its mountains and peaks, its ruins and traditions. He will always be in line with the great Lal Ded, Nund Reshi, Krishen Joo Razdan and Shamas Faqir.

In the words of Nekrassov (a Russian poet): "And, thou, poet, art chosen of the skies, voice of truths eternal."

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## DINA NATH KAUL 'NADIM'

*The 'Gentle Colossus' of Modern Kashmiri Literature*

*Onkar Kachru*

**Late Dina Nath Kaul**, who wrote under the pen-name of *Nadim* - the humble one – belonged to a lower middle class family of Kashmiri Pandits, who resided in Habba Kadal (second bridge), Srinagar. Orphaned in a tender age of seven, Dina, as his mother Sonder Ded affectionately called her darling son, had to eke out their existence in grinding poverty. Steeled will and the spinning wheel of Dina's mother were the only means to sustain the mother-son duo. In rearing and upbringing of the future colossus of the Kashmiri literature, Sonder Ded played her great role, both as mother and *Guru* to her Dina. While talking to me in one of the many chat-sessions, Dina Nath 'Nadim' acknowledged his gratitude in these words: "I would never have become a poet but for my mother, who in cold winter nights, sang to me in her sweet, lilting voice, while spinning yarn, the *Vakhs* (verse sayings) of Lal Ded and the lilting lyrics of Habba Khatoon and Arnimaal Kachroo."<sup>1</sup>

By the time he passed his matriculation, Dina Nath had become a voracious reader of books, a married "man" and a teacher who gave private tuitions to augment the meagre earnings of his beloved mother. In these days of constant struggle to survive, he penned his first poem, but in English – *The Dawn*.

By then the first rumblings of awakening in that land of "Lotus Eaters" – the Kashmir Valley were getting clearly audible. The autocratic rule had become too oppressive to be tolerated. Despite oppressive measures like muzzling of the print media and ban on processions etc, echoes of the Indian freedom movement were being heard in the isolated valley. It was at this time that a great tragedy struck Dina Nath. His friend, philosopher and guide Sonder Ded – his mother, passed away. This sudden blow unhinged and shattered him completely. He almost became a mystic.





*Participating in a Mushaira. From Left to Right: R.L. Shant, M.L. Bekas, Dina Nath 'Nadim', Rafiq Raaz, Rehman Rahi and Margoob Banihali.*



*Nadim receiving "Kalhana Award" from the then President of India, Gyani Zail Singh in Nehru Memorial Museum & Library, New Delhi with other awardees; from left to right: Late Ghulam Rasool 'Santosh', a renowned Kashmiri painter; Gyani Zail Singh; Nadim and a famous scientist.*



*Dina Nath 'Nadim'  
speaking to the  
distinguished gathering  
in Nehru Memorial  
Museum & Library,  
New Delhi after  
receiving the  
Kalhana Award.*

This frustrating mood of the budding poet found expression in his Urdu poetry. But what saved Dina Nath 'Nadim' for the great historical role he was destined to play in days and years to come, was the powerful urge to write, to create, to express himself in verse. The appalling and oppressive socio-political conditions that existed around the extremely sensitive poet made 'Nadim' restless. He could not keep himself aloof from his surroundings. "The hungry, haggard looks" of poverty stricken people penetrated his soul and roused his anger. I remember two lines of his one Urdu poem *Mazdoor Kaa Khwaab*, which 'Nadim' was found of quoting:

*Hazaar fitney hein posheeda faaqa-kash tan mein  
Nigaahe muflis mein inqalaab palta hai*

[A thousand upheavals are hidden in a hungry soul, (and) the revolution breeds in the gaze of the poor].

It will not be out of place to quote Nadim Saheb on his Urdu poetry. In the 'Aagur Neb' (Preface) of his Sahitya Akademy Award winning collection of Kashmiri poems *Shihil Kul* (Shadow Offering Tree) he writes: "...when the struggle for the Responsible Government started in 1931, its base was laid by the Urdu poems like *Mazdoor*

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*kaa khwaab, Mazdoor kee maut* and *Meraa Kashmir*. I read these poems in the mass meetings and police arrested me. My home was searched and all of my Urdu poems were confiscated....”

The year 1938 was golden chapter in the annals of the people’s struggle against the oppressive autocratic rule in the Princely State of Jammu and Kashmir. In this year a qualitative transformation took place in the said struggle. All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference was changed into All Jammu and Kashmir National Conference (NC), and Sheikh Mohd. Abdullah emerged as the leader of majority of the Jammu and Kashmir people. Many forward looking people of the minority community, popularly known as Kashmiri Pandits, like Prem Nath Bazaz and Kashap Bandhu, and some Sikhs like Sardar Budh Singh began to join the new political party (NC), and its agitational programmes. The struggle against the feudal autocracy of the State saw its climax in the ‘Quit Kashmir’ movement of 1946, which set its goal as building a *Naya Kashmir* (New Kashmir) based on a new social order of secularism and equality.

Meanwhile, Dina Nath ‘Nadim’ had recovered after a severe illness in Jammu and was in acute mental turmoil and distress because of the terrible tragic events that had overtaken the whole of Indian sub-continent on the eve of its partition. These ghastly events had wounded the hyper-sensitive soul of the poet deeply. This shook him out of his long hybernation “with my broken body” as Nadim writes in the Preface of his collection of poems *Shihil Kul*. “What happened after that I don’t know”, adds Nadim. But he realised that a great change of far-reaching consequences and many expectations had taken place “of which in my sub-conscious mind I had become an inseparable part. Sheikh Saheb had been released. The country had been partitioned....”

In his gripping style of prose-writing Nadim Saheb describes those fateful days thus: “I was in Jammu...I reached Kashmir. There was chaos alround. Maharaja Saheb had run away. People were sitting on the roads and in streets around night fires along with their wooden guns, performing their night vigil. At dead of night I reached Lal Chowk. I was

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immediately surrounded by alert people (volunteers). (Fortunately) Shayam Lal Saraf and Jia Lal Kilam recognised me and came to my rescue. They asked two volunteers to accompany me. I found my home occupied by some strangers. I took shelter in a neighbour's house.... In the morning I went out in search of my wife and daughter. I did not know their whereabouts. And lo and behold, a marching poem in Kashmiri gushed out from my inner depths:

"चँ छुख कशीरि हुंद जवान, तुलुन च्य छुय आलुक निशान  
चँ गंड कमर तँ तुल कमंद, सितारँ सोन कर बुलंद  
कशीरि हँन्ज चँ बन ।  
चँ मीरे कारवान बन कशीरि पासवान बन ।।  
चँ नार छुख अलाव छुख, चँ यावनुक जलाव छुख  
अगर चँ सोंतँ वाव छुख ।  
चँ नेर औबरँ तँल्य खटिथ, चँ नेर कोहँ तँ वन चटिथ  
शहीदँ नँय चँ शान बन  
चँ मीरे कारवान बन, कशीरि पासवान बन ।"<sup>2</sup>

One should note the marching meter and rhythm of the poem, a song that was need of the hour. It was a call to the youth of Kashmir to take up the leadership and become the torch-bearer and protector of the then Kashmir.

Nadim Saheb again relates a tale in his fascinating Kashmiri prose. Writing regarding this poem, he writes: "With this poem I had gone to Mujahid Manzil (the Head Quarter of the National Conference). Those days youngmen had occupied the stage there. Who would notice, an ill-clad haggard looking man like me?... No one recognised me there... in that hectic atmosphere. Somehow I managed to reach near the dais. A Sardarjee was reciting something. I pleaded, 'please give me also two minutes'. A stern look at me by the district NC President Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din Karra and he said 'no'... But fortunately Bakhsi Ghulam Mohammed noticed me. He managed two minutes for me. And lo and behold, Sheikh (Abdullah) Saheb also arrived at that time. Bakshi called me to read my poem. I recited the said poem. There was a pindrop silence. They were taken by surprise.... Next morning Som Nath Zutshi dropped in. He told me 'there is a mass meeting at Habba Kadal. You have to come there but with your poem'. 'Not the same

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poem' I told him firmly 'but I will recite a different one there'.

“बैं बायि पननि क्याह वनय च्य ग्रावें करनि वारयाह  
चे गिलें ति छिय करँज स्यठाह, मगर म्य बोड छु तऽजिबा  
.....”<sup>3</sup>

[O my brother dear you have complaints galore. But I wonder why don't you realise:

Your rotten old shackles have broken down? Have'nt the old days of slavery, full of deceit and intrigue passed away?...] ]

Then the poet asks many questions: “Does'nt he love you, he who freed your homeland? He who rehabilitated your garden? For your rights many a time he became a prisoner...” Obviously, the 'he' is Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah!

“This was the turning point”, writes Dina Nath Nadim, “Since that day my poetry had a smooth flow”.

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Hardly two months after the birth of Pakistan, she was conspiring to grab Kashmir by foul means. The newly won freedom got by the people of the State after throwing off the century old autocratic feudal rule, was about to face the mortal danger of a terrible magnitude. Pakistan with the active support of defeated British colonial rule, was conspiring to enslave once again the Kashmiri people. But paradoxically, Pakistan's tribal invasion proved a blessing in disguise in one particular field. It led to a remarkable cultural awakening of the people. The dormant forces of cultural change and rejuvenation were unleashed which gave birth to a new Cultural Renaissance. To consolidate it *Qaumi Cultural Mahaaz* – National Cultural Front – came into existence, and scores of writers, artists, theatre persons joined it. 'Progressive Writers Association' and 'Progressive Artists Association' were formed. And with the turbulence and turmoil of that era, the towering personality of Dina Nath Kaul 'Nadim' emerged as one of the moving spirits behind this cultural revolution of unimaginable potential and magnitude.

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With the arrival of Nadim on the scene, another event of historical importance took place. The first Kashmiri monthly journal *Kong Posh* (Saffron Flower) came into being. The mantle of its editorship also fell on Nadim Saheb. This journal played the pivotal role and became the mouthpiece of the advancing cultural movement. But due to various factors, this cultural renaissance movement of Kashmir lost its inertia, and *Kong Posh* became the first major victim of this unfortunate development. It died its untimely death! But this tragedy did reveal an entirely different facet of Nadim as a journalist. This fascinating aspect of Nadim, the trend setter in modern Kashmiri literature, remains untouched to this day.

It is almost impossible to evaluate Dina Nath Nadim as a litterateur in a short article of few pages. Suffice it to say that as the harbinger of a new era, a *yug-pravartak* as we call in Hindi, in Kashmiri literature, Nadim revolutionised Kashmiri poetry, both in its content and in form. By introducing free and blank verse he freed Kashmiri verse from the hackneyed and stifling form of *Ghazal*, which in any case was quite inadequate to express the very fast moving events and moods of those hectic days. Nadim's famous poem *vushun vushun, vozul vozul, vushun vozul, vozul vushun chhu khoon myon* was the product of those days of turmoil and change, which appeared like a thunder bolt and caught the imagination of the roused Kashmiri people. It was the first Kashmiri poem written in free verse, with a new rhyme and rhythm!

As the pioneer of a new epoch in Kashmiri literature Nadim Saheb became a trend-setter. There are many firsts that go to his credit. He wrote the first Kashmiri Sonnet *गाशिश्तारुख* (Morning Star), his second Sonnet *जून खअच्च चोट हिश* (Bread like moon rose in the sky), created waves in our literary world. Based on a Kashmiri folk tale, he wrote the first Kashmiri Opera *बो'म्बुर-यम्बरजल* (Bumblebee Narcissus). When staged, it took every one by storm. Its Russian translation in summary form was done, when top Soviet dignitaries, Khrushchev and Bulganian, visited Kashmir in 1955, along with a large team of Russians. The performance of *Bombur-Yamberzal* overwhelmed them.... Nadim

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Saheb also wrote the first Kashmiri short story *Jawaebi kaad* (Reply paid post card), as well as the first shadow play *Zameen gayi hael sanz* (ज़मीन गयि हऱल्य सँज) – Land belongs to its tiller.

By profession Dina Nath Nadim was a teacher and an educationist. He retired as the Principal of Lal Ded Higher Secondary School run by Hindu Educational Society of which he was a founder member. Through its various schools, this society played a great role in spreading education in the valley.

Nadim Saheb became the founder president of All Jammu and Kashmir Teachers Association and represented the teachers community as their elected representative in the Legislative Council of the J&K State. He visited the Peoples Republic of China, as the member of the first delegation of All India Peace Council in 1949. This visit gave vent to a fascinating series of articles which were published in *Azad*, an Urdu monthly of Srinagar. One of these articles, written in the form of a story was *Sun Yami*, which depicted the birth of new woman of China.

Nadim was a Marxist by conviction, a socially committed writer and a great humanist. He devoted both his pen and politics for the well being of peoples, universal brotherhood, world peace and against war, war mongers and violence. Nadim devoted a number of his poetic creations like *Mey chham Aash paghach* (Tomorrow is my hope), *Waavan vonnam* (Wind gave me the message), *Aman appeali peyth daskhat* (Signature on the peace appeal) etc. to these themes. These poems have become an immortal treasure of the Kashmiri literature.

How Dina Nath ‘Nadim’ embraced the sweet and soothing bosom of his mother tongue, Kashmiri – bidding good bye to Urdu and Hindi? There hangs an interesting tale regarding this basic changeover that proved an asset of far reaching importance for the growth and expansion of Kashmiri literature in general and for its poetry in particular. Referring to his first Kashmiri poem, this is what this colossus of Kashmiri Literature says about this changeover:

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“These verses are from my that first (Kashmiri) poem which I had written in 1948. It is laden with Sanskrit words.... It was published in the (S.P.) College magazine named *Prataap*, in international phonetic (Roman) script and its publisher was (Prof.) Shrikanth Toshkhani...”<sup>4</sup>

Then Nadim Saheb reveals another important fact: this poem bore the pen-name of *Matri Bhakt* (ekr HkDr) – Mother’s Devotee. “This was because” Nadim says, “those days I was writing poetry in Urdu. I was ashamed of writing in Kashmiri.... I wonder why I did not feel attracted to my mother tongue until 1941. But one day, after my serious illness in 1948, Arif came to visit me. He had arranged a Mushaira in the Nishat Bagh. Those days this Mughal garden was beyond the municipal limits of the Srinagar city. In spite of my indifferent health I went to attend the Mushaira. I could not say no to Arif Saheb who had been my classmate. He was pleasantly surprised when I recited this Kashmiri poem there:

‘मुच्चैरावी बर तय दारि व्यसी, सोंथहय सालस आव  
ग्वलाब सोम्बलन सऽत्य सऽती कऽत्य कालय आव  
फो’ज टेकैबटज स्यदि बद्यन माय बरऽनी  
तस न्यंदरि हत्यन छायि गँत्यन आयि जवऽनी  
युस लाले खटिथ ओस चटिथ जामे सु नो’न द्राव  
मुच्चैरावी बर तय दारि व्यसी सोंथहय सालय आव  
बेताब ज्वयन बुंगरि नरयन छवज छु हुरयोमुत  
खुमारै हत्यन पोशिपवत्यन वुछतै कोताह चाव  
.....  
.....  
तम्य आसि चुवमैच लोलैहत्यन कारिपत्यन सऽत्य  
या आसि शो’गमुत म्यानि दिलक्यन नारैतत्यन सऽत्य  
नतै क्याजि वो’शल्योमुत छु बालन छायि सुबहुक वाव  
मुच्चैरावी बर तय बारि व्यसी सोंथहय सालय आव

“When I finished the recitation of this poem”, continues Nadim Saheb, “a deafening cry ब्ययि परिवृब्ययि परिव – read again, read again – rent the air”.<sup>5</sup> [Introduction of शिहिल कुल].

This poem is the fascinating and lilting description of the arrival of सोंथ (sonth) – the Spring in Kashmir. It is almost impossible to render it



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into any language. This is true for most of Nadim Saheb's master pieces which are quite large in number and they have become the milestones of Kashmiri poetry.<sup>6</sup> It is so because his muse is full of unparalleled similies, matchless imageries and the smooth flow of Kashmiri words just touch the very core of the heart. They are so natural that people feel an instant rapport with his poems. Nevertheless, some of Nadim's poems have been translated into English and Hindi.<sup>7</sup>

Nadim Saheb's one glaring poetic quality was his unquenching thirst for experimentation. It is reflected both in his content and form. Apart from *Vaakh* (Lal Ded), *Shrukh* (Sheikh Nuruddin – Nunda Reshi) *Tukh* and *Ghazal* forms he also tried his hand in *mussadas*, that is six line poems. Several poems written in this form under the caption of हस्यसाथ (*Haersaath* – Happenings), bear testimony to this fact. But even in these six liners, the poet of the people did not forget the downtrodden, the neglected, the humblest of the humble, such as a piece of mirror thrown on a garbage dump, a torn shoe lying by the road side, and a piece of stone that is destined to be crushed. A unique thing about Nadim's poetry is that woman and child is an inseparable part of his many poems, such as f=ot kg (Fiftythree), veu vilfy l;B nL[kr (Signing the peace appeal), My gkt fu gn X; oq (The Song of Dal Lake's boat-woman), E; Ne vk k ixgjb (Tomorrow is my hope), lk k rWg#n (Spring and Autumn) and many more.

I can conclude this essay by saying that Late Dina Nath Kaul 'Nadim' - the 'Gentle colossus' of Modern Kashmiri Literature - straddled the literary and the socio-cultural stage of Kashmir for more than four decades, and influenced several generations of Kashmiri litterateurs. He will remain a light-house, a path-finder, whose immortal muse will illuminate the darkness that has engulfed Kashmir, the land of his dreams!

**NOTES AND REFERENCES**

1. Lal Ded (Lalleshwari) was a great Shaivite saint – poetess of 14th century. Habba Khatoon, was an ordinary peasant lass named Zoon, who became the queen of Yusuf Shah, a king of Chak dynasty of 16th century, and Arnimaal was the neglected wife of Bhawani Das Kachroo, a feudal official of 18th century, who though a person of easy virtues, gave Persian literature his immortal work *Behre Taweel*.
2. See *Shihil Kul* (Nadim's collection of Kashmiri poems).
3. *Ibid*, p.36.
4. *Ibid*, p.32.
5. *Ibid*, p.33.
6. Some of them are: स्व विज्ञ (That Moment), इरादें (Determination), गोनैमातस मोतुक शर करि क्याह (The Poet will Defy the Death), दोद (Pain), वावन वोननम (Wind), बें ग्यवनेँ अज्ञ (I will not sing today), गासँतुल (A blade of grass), गाशि तारुख (The Pole Star), त्रिवंजाह (Fifty three), दोहें अकि कोट पँत्य... (Sonnet), म्य छम आश पगहँच (My hope is tomorrow), डल हाँजनिहुँद ग्यवुन (Song of the woman vegetable – seller of Dal Lake), अमन अपीलि प्यठ दस्खत (Signing the Peace Appeal), नाबद तें द्यठव्यन (Sweet and Sour), सोंथ तें हरुद (Spring and Autumn), y[łp Nqy[łp (Laxmi has a mole), 0; rLrk (River Jhelum), cplj nkj dfjfk ftaxh Qhj oki l (Proud and unvanquished, the life returned).
7. T.N. Raina, Shyam Kaul, S.S. Toshkhani, Hari Krishan Kaul, Shantivir Kaul, T.N. Kaul, Shibani Krishan Raina, Onkar Kachru, Arjan Dev 'Majboor' and others have rendered some of Nadim Saheb's path-breaking poems into English and Hindi.

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## VITASTA IS MY ETERNAL SONG: NADIM

*Ravinder Kaul*

*(Excerpts from Nadim's interview by Ravinder Kaul in 1987, which was published by Kashmir Times, Jammu on 10 April 1988, soon after the demise of the poet.)*

I met Dina Nath 'Nadim' on a wintry day in 1987 for the first and the last time at his son's residence in Jammu. The sky was overcast and the rain seemed imminent. My friend P.K. Raina, who had been instrumental in fixing up the appointment for me, accompanied me. I was carrying an awkwardly big tape-cum-transistor with me. It was a Sunday and we were received by the entire family in the living room. After having tea and exchanging pleasantries they left us alone except Nadim and his wife who stayed back in the room with us. As I switched on the tape recorder, the formal interview began. We were talking in Kashmiri. Since I had done my homework it was easy to ask some pertinent questions. It was also the happiest moment as the Sahitya Akademi award for Nadim had been announced sometimes back but the award ceremony was to take place in New Delhi after few days. I could sense that at his age and with his stature, the award hardly carried any meaning for Nadim. He talked freely about his past, his achievements and his contemporaries.

Although prior to the interview I had tried to gather as much information as I could about Nadim and his contribution to Kashmiri literature, I was not really aware of the fact that he inspired numerous of his peers. I got an idea of this much later when I was interviewing Rehman Rahi, one of the finest Kashmiri poets of our times. Rahi said that whenever a poet was invited to participate in a *Mushaira* in which Nadim was also to recite his poems, everyone would make special preparations and choose one's finest work in order to leave an impression on Nadim as well as the audience. Yet, despite all these preparations, when finally Nadim would start reciting his poems, their

plight appeared to be similar to that of punctured balloons. They would only sigh and wonder if a day would dawn when their poetry would come anywhere close to the poetry of Nadim.

**Ravinder Kaul:** Tell us something about your childhood.

**Dina Nath 'Nadim':** I was born in 1916. I still remember many incidents of my childhood. I would sometimes imagine seeing strange people. I would talk to imaginary characters. Hallucinations probably? My parents used to be worried about me. They would sometimes wonder if I was mentally retarded or an idiot perhaps. When I was 7 years old my father died and we were only two people left in the family; myself and my mother.

**R.K.:** You were the only child?

**D.N.N.:** I also had a sister, elder to me by six years. Our relatives had pooled some money and married her off in the very year of my father's death because we had no money and they wanted to relieve my mother of the responsibility.

**R.K.:** What did your father do for a living?

**D.N.N.:** He was a clerk in the customs department. I distinctly remember that we had only one and a half rupees in our home when he died. Even his last rites were performed with the help of a social organisation. When I was 9 or 10 years old and studying in 6<sup>th</sup> standard, I began teaching a student of 1<sup>st</sup> standard. I would be paid two rupees as tuition fee. My mother used to spin thread on *Charkha* and thus earn a few rupees. I would sit beside her and listen to *Lal Vakh* (Verses of Lal Ded) which she would sing while working. I have been a great fan of Lal Ded's poetry since that time. I always had to read from the second hand books given to me by my relatives. I remember, when I had to appear in the Matriculation examination, my teacher paid my fees.

**R.K.:** Do you remember some of your teachers?

**D.N.N.:** They were all very good. Although they would beat us up at times but that too would be for our benefit. There was Shiva Kaul

'Middle', Dina Nath Fotedar, Radha Krishan Pandit, Jamna Dass, Karam Chand and Bhagat Ram. I got a 1<sup>st</sup> Division in Matriculation examination. My mother wanted me to take up a job but I wanted to study further and I joined college against her wishes. I was also regularly doing tuitions at that time. One of my students was Arjun Nath Thussu, who later rose to the rank of a Chief Engineer. His parents would pay me ten rupees as tuition fee.

**R.K.:** Your relatives did not help you?

**D.N.N.:** No, they did not. Probably, because we were very egoistic. (His wife, who sat on a sofa all through the interview, interrupts to add. "His mother was a very proud woman, she would not accept charity"). We would at times go without food but we used to live with self-respect and dignity. It was around this time, i.e. 1932, that I joined Kashmiri Pandit agitation. I was greatly influenced by Bhagat Singh. When he was executed, we did not eat anything for days together, in grief. So, I wrote *Lenin* on a piece of paper and a few lines extolling him and put that paper into the bottle-bomb. We kept that bottle bomb outside the Library of the S.P. College. There were a few students there. Among them were Nabh Ji and Aziz Kashmiri, who later became an editor in Pakistan. When they saw the bomb, they shouted loudly "beware there is a bomb here". Although it did not explode, it created a sensation. The Principal Mcdermutt called the Police which defused the bomb. The incident was reported in *Daily Milap* the next day. We were four of us involved in this incident including Jagan Nath Sosan, Balbadher Zutshi and Prem Nath Dass. All of them have since expired. We were also greatly influenced by Chakbast's poetry at that time.

It was during these days that within a span of 10 years, my sister, her husband and her three sons expired one after the other. I was so grief stricken that I started writing poetry in Urdu. I also wrote *Devdas Ka Ek Din* in Hindi.

**R.K.:** Did you get your poems corrected (*Islah*) by someone?

**D.N.N.:** No, Maulana Mohd. Sayeed Masoodi alone has corrected one of my poems *Mazdoor Ka Khwab*. During the times of

(Gopaldaswami) Iyenger, (the then Prime Minister) Sheikh Abdullah raised me in his arms in a public meeting and told the gathering that 'Look, here is our poet and he has nothing to eat'. It was the day when Muslim Conference was converted into National Conference. Then came the demand for responsible government and I joined that agitation. I was arrested and my house was searched. There was nothing incriminating in my house. Only books of Urdu poetry. I was released by the Court on the third day. At that time there used to be dictators of the agitation. First dictator, second dictator, third dictator and so on. Among these was Mohiuddin Karra, Moti Lal Zutshi, Sadaruddin Mujahid. I was also among them.

When I was released, I left Srinagar and came to Jammu. I did a few tuitions here and during this time I felt why should not I write in my own language and I wrote my first poem in Kashmiri *Jagat Janani Bhawani Maaj Paniney* on the lines of *Vande Matram*.

**R.K.:** How did this transition from Urdu to Kashmiri take place?

**D.N.N.:** I had an Ustad, and well wisher Ahsan Bin Danish in Lahore. He had come to Srinagar to participate in a *Mushaira* and we met. It was at his insistence that I started writing in Kashmiri. Then there was Arif Sahib (Mirza G.M. Arif Beg) who was my class mate. He also told me in 1945 that I should write in Kashmiri and I wrote *Macharawi Bar Tu Dari Wesiye Sont Hai Sal Aaw*. It was spring.

In the meantime I had started teaching in Hindu School, of which I was one of the founders. I also got married after this at the insistence of my mother in 1941. One of my early poems was *Wathi Bag-ch-Kukli Koo Koo Kar*.

**R.K.:** How did you adopt the *nom-de-plume* 'Nadim'?

**D.N.N.:** It is an interesting story. Prem Nath Shala was one of my elders and he was friendly towards me. He once said that I will give you a new *Takhallus (nom-de-plume)*. I used to write *Makhmoor* till then, and he gave me the new name *Nadim*, and I accepted it gratefully. I had no idea that there already existed another

Nadim at that time, Abdul Ahad Nadim of Bandipur. Then I joined the Cultural Front.

**R.K.:** What was the background of Cultural Front?

**D.N.N.:** It was a communist organisation. Covered and underground communist organisation. It also had Pran Kishore, Shahabuddin Ahmed, Peer Abdul Ahad, Ghulam Rasool as its members.

During these days I also recited a poem in Mujahid Manzil in the presence of Sheikh Sahib. I requested Som Nath Zutshi, Shyam Lal Saraf and Mohiuddin Karra that I wanted to recite a poem but they said that it was not possible to get time as the schedule was very tight. Ultimately Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad spotted me and called me on to the dias and gave me two minutes. I recited two poems and became a celebrity overnight. My mother had expired in 1944 and she became the alter-image of my Kashmiri language and I began to decorate her with every thing I had in my repertoire.

**R.K.:** What were your other influences?

**D.N.N.:** Mayakovsky had become my ideologue because I had become Secretary of Progressive Writers forum. I became Editor of *Kong Posh* and during this time I wrote Operas, Harisaat, Sonnets, Free Verse. In 1959 I wrote *Nabad Tyeth Wan*. It is the first modern poem (*Jadid*) in Kashmiri. *Bijli Batti andi andi Mah Jorah*. Before this – I had written *Thahar Lai-e-Bronh Ma pakh* and *Bu Gyava na az*.

**R.K.:** In 1953 you have written *Tomul Hai Shirin Hai* what was the background in which you wrote this poem?

**D.N.N.:** I used to buy rice for my home from a ration shop. During the month of Magh I went to fetch rice and a Muslim woman also had come to buy rice alongwith her young son. She asked for one *manut* of rice. But the shopkeeper said that she had already taken her quota of rice for the month and she would not get any more. I requested the shopkeeper to give her rice but he declined to oblige. At about the same time the son of the woman picked up a handful of rice and the

labourer (*Hamal*) of the shopkeeper put his nail studded shoe on the hand of the child. The child cried in agony and so did I. I asked the shopkeeper to give a manut of rice from my quota of ration to the woman and went home and wrote *Dedi Tomul Hai, Shirin Hai, Mishir Hai*. It is a dramatic dialogue.

**R.K.:** Did you have any contact with progressive writers of other languages living in other parts of the country?

**D.N.N.:** There was Krishan Chander, Rajinder Singh Bedi, Sajjad Zaheer, Ali Sardar Jafri, Sahir. They were all my friends. I used to live in Magharmal Bagh and they used to come to see me whenever they would come to Srinagar.

**R.K.:** What about other writers in Kashmiri like Mahjoor.

**D.N.N.:** I used to call Mahjoor my maternal uncle. He once asked me about my place of origin. I told him that my mother hailed from the village Murran and that I had lived there. Then he said that since he also belonged to the same area (Trigam), he was as good as my mother's brother and thus my maternal uncle. He said about me once that I was the future of Kashmiri Language. He has also corrected some of my poems. I have a photograph with him and Master Zinda Kaul.

**R.K.:** When and how did you go to China?

**D.N.N.:** I went to China in 1952. I was Secretary of Peace Committee and I represented Kashmir in the delegation.

**R.K.:** Tell us something about your experiences in China?

**D.N.N.:** It is a beautiful country but one thing that I protested against in China was that they did not agree with the accession of Kashmir with India. Secretary of the Communist Party Gopalan also protested alongwith me. Chinese wanted to appease the Pakistani delegation. I also saw an opera there titled *Grey Haired Girl* and I wrote an opera *Bombur Ta Yamberzal* immediately after returning from China. It was later translated into Russian.

Another achievement of my literary career is writing of *Harisaat*.



**R.K.:** What kind of form is *Harisaat* and what are its contents?

**D.N.N.:** (Recites an example) *Buta Khora Akh, Wati pyeth Pyomit.*

**R.K.:** It seems to contain somewhat surrealistic imagery?

**D.N.N.:** It is surrealistic imagery all right but its basis is *Lal Wakh*. There are small things, very small things in the world which we generally ignore and I wanted to probe those things. I can't write now because I am ailing and invalid but my brain is still very alive and I wish to express myself in *Harisaat*.

**R.K.:** You have also written a poem on Nehru.

**D.N.N.:** Not one but many poems, because Nehru was a leader who was very dear to the people.

**R.K.:** You claim to be a fan of Nehru and you also profess allegiance to communist ideology. Don't you think there is an ideological contradiction in this?

**D.N.N.:** I am not the fan of Nehru the administrator or ruler, I am the fan of Nehru the scholar. I also like Nehru because I am an agnostic and he too was an agnostic.

**R.K.:** It appears that during your career as a writer you have stepped on many toes. You seem to have antagonised many people. Was it because of ego clashes?

**D.N.N.:** There were no ego clashes. It was plain and simple professional envy. Many people resented my success. They gave me respect also but at the same time many of them were antagonised as well. I wrote the first story in Kashmiri *Jawabi Card*. I wrote the first critical Essay *Magar Karvan Sone Bronh Pakan Gaw*. This was the reason. They used to hate me for my success and my achievements.

**R.K.:** Why have you published so little work in book form?

**D.N.N.:** Because I was very busy in teachers' movement.

**R.K.:** You also sat in the Legislative Council for one term. How was that experience?

**D.N.N.:** I became ideologically perfect with that experience.

**R.K.:** What was your role in the Council?

**D.N.N.:** My role was critical of the policies of the government affecting the teachers. I wanted not only higher salary for the teachers but also a system that could convert the teachers into 'real' teachers. That is why I affiliated the teachers movement with CPM. When the Low Paid Employees' Federation was formed, I became its President and I tried to bring that body also nearer to the progressive movement.

**R.K.:** With your kind of ideology how did you find a place in the Council in the first place?

**D.N.N.:** I did not find a place because of certain people but I found a place because of my devotion towards the cause of teachers.

**R.K.:** How do you feel on receiving the Sahitya Akademi Award?

**D.N.N.:** I'll tell you a small story. There was a lion who had some how got entangled in a strong net and he was struggling to free himself. A small squirill came to lion's rescue and freed him after cutting the net loose. The lion promised to reward the squirill with a gift of nuts. But before the promise could be fulfilled, the lion got involved in some other work and forgot the promise only to remember it a few years later. When finally he went to the squirill with the gift of nuts he found that the squirill had lost all its teeth and thus could not enjoy the gift.

**R.K.:** You have also received the Soviet Land Nehru Award and visited Russia in that connection. Tell us something about that.

**D.N.N.:** In Russia I visited Minsk. Everybody had been slaughtered in that city during the World War-II, and I was very moved by the sight of that city. I found a huge white-collared-beaurucracy existing in that country and I hated it. There is no freedom there.

**R.K.:** We have an Academy of Art, Culture and Languages in our State. Tell us something about its functioning and its role in our State.

**D.N.N.:** It has a very great role. But there should be no government interference in such organisations. There used to be a person called B.P.L. Bedi in Srinagar. He was a member of the

Communist Party. He used to say that such bodies should be free from all government control and we tried to do it. We tried to form our own forum on these lines but because of lack of funds and space we could not run it for long.

**R.K.:** Do you have any unfulfilled desire?

**D.N.N.:** I would very much like to reveal myself in *Harisaat*. That is the best I have written so far. Not free verse, blank verse or sonnets.

**R.K.:** Do you have any message for the new generation of writers?

**D.N.N.:** They should be sincere towards themselves, towards their work and towards their language. They should not Persianise the Kashmiri language to the extent it is being done now. I shall conclude now. *Vitasta* that I have written is my eternal song and I want to be like *Vitasta*. It is my earnest desire that when I die I should be singing the song of *Vitasta*.

## CULTURAL HERITAGE OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR

### *Seminar & Workshop-cum-Exhibition Report*

The Himalayan Research and Cultural Foundation organised a three day National Seminar on *Cultural Heritage of Jammu and Kashmir*, and a three-day Workshop on *Heritage Conservation* accompanied by exhibition of paintings and sculptures at the Abhinav Theatre Complex, J&K Cultural Academy, Jammu from 29 February to 2 March 2004. Among the artists who contributed to the Exhibition were Prof. Manjula Chaturvedi from Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi, Rajendra Tikoo, internationally famed sculptor from J&K State and Suman Gupta, the well known painter from Jammu. The workshop on Heritage Conservation was held in association with PATH – a Jammu based NGO involved in the preservation of art treasure and heritage. Both the Seminar, Exhibition and Workshop received overwhelming response from various walks of life, particularly academia from Universities of Jammu and Kashmir, Girls College, Jammu, Secondary Schools in Jammu, media, cultural circles and others. Whereas over two thousand delegates mainly students from University of Jammu and local colleges/secondary schools participated in the three-day Workshop on Heritage Conservation, about one hundred academics, media persons, litterateurs and cultural personalities took part in the three-day deliberations analysing various issues related to the rich and variegated cultural heritage of Jammu and Kashmir.

The Seminar was inaugurated by Prof. Amitabh Mattoo, Vice Chancellor, Jammu University on 1 March 2004. Sh. S.P. Sahni, the veteran journalist, author and social activist presided and presented the keynote address. On this occasion the popular paperback edition of the book *Bamiyan: Challenge to World Heritage* (edited by Prof. K. Warikoo) and published under the auspices of the Himalayan Research and Cultural Foundation was released. As part of this inaugural function, a play *Samey-o-Samey* presented by the Duggar Manch, was staged. Prominent participants in the seminar included Prof. Amitabh Mattoo,

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Vice Chancellor, Jammu University, Prof. Zahuruddin, Prof. Jigar Mohammad, Prof. Ved Kumari Ghai, Prof. Deepak Raj Gupta, Prof. Lalit Magotra, Prof. Champa Sharma all from Jammu University; Manoj Chopra, Padamshri Prof. Ram Nath Shastri, M.M. Khajuria, P.B. Sengar and Mr. S. P. Sahani, the prominent intellectuals from Jammu; Prof. Riyaz Punjabi, Dr. Hamidullah Marazi, Dr. Ali Mohammad Rather from University of Kashmir; Prof. (Mrs.) Manjula Chaturvedi, Dr. Ajay Singh, Ms. Shuchita Sharma and Ms. Khushboo from Kashi Vidyapeeth and Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi; Dr. Sunil Khosa, Mr. Lalit Gupta and Mr. Rajender Tiku from J&K Institute of Music and Fine Arts; Mr. Ramesh Mehta, Secretary, J&K Cultural Academy, Mr. Javed Rahi; Dr. B.L Malla from IGNSA, New Delhi, Mr. Janhwij Sharma from INTACH, New Delhi; Mr. Mohan Singh and Mr. Ravinder Kaul from Duggar Manch, Jammu; Mr. Triloke Kaul, Mr. P.N. Kachru and Mr. Suman Gupta, leading artists from Jammu and Kashmir; Tsering Tashi from Zanskar (Ladakh) and media representatives from various parts of Jammu and Kashmir.

Prof. K. Warikoo, Director, Central Asian Studies Programme, Jawaharlal Nehru University and Secretary General, Himalayan Research and Cultural Foundation, in his welcome address stressed that the State of Jammu and Kashmir is marked by the heterogeneity of its physiographic, ethnic-religious, linguistic and cultural features. It has evolved over a period of time a common composite cultural heritage. Whereas Kashmiris have made a remarkable contribution to Indian historiography, philosophy, aesthetics, Sanskrit and Persian literature, Dogras have made their mark as painters and builders of temples and forts. Through Basohli and other schools of miniature paintings, Dogras have made their mark in the development of painting in India. The people of Ladakh, which is known as the land of Lamas, are deeply religious. Prof. Warikoo pointed out that pernicious external influences and terrorism have dealt a severe blow to the rich and diverse cultural heritage of Jammu and Kashmir. He added that revival of indigenous art and culture, language and literature, social formations, festivals in Jammu and Kashmir, will greatly help in the restoration of its composite

socio-cultural ethos and providing a positive alternative to the people to articulate their ethno-cultural aspirations.

Prof. Amitabh Mattoo in his inaugural address stressed the need to preserve living heritage and develop continuous link of the civil society with culture and heritage. He called upon the civil society to initiate peoples' movement in this regard.

Sati Sahni in his keynote address elucidated the composite character of the heritage of Jammu and Kashmir. He urged the government to formulate a cultural policy for the State of Jammu and Kashmir.

The first session of the Seminar traced the Buddhist, Vaishnavite and Shaivite traditions/philosophy of Kashmir, which were discussed threadbare by specialists like Dr. Advaitavadini and Dr. B.L. Malla of IGNC, Prof. M.L. Kokiloo and others. Dr. S.S. Toshkhani dwelt at length on Kashmiri's role in the development of India's cultural traditions. Second session focussed on features of Kashmiriat, influence of Advaita on Muslim Rishis of Kashmir, Sufism in Kashmir, Mystic Poetry, Heritage of Gujjars, Shia Muslims of Kashmir, Buddhist Traditions in Ladakh. Prominent panelists in this session included Dr. Hamid Naseem Rafiabadi, Head, Islamic Studies, University of Kashmir, Prof. Riyaz Punjabi, Dr. Ali Mohd. Rather, Dr. Nawang Tsering, T.N. Dhar Kundan, Javed Rahi.

Dr. Hamid Naseem pointed out that it was only in Kashmir that the two orders of Sufism and Rishism emerged indigenously. Prof. Riyaz Punjabi while highlighting the mystique of *Kashmiriat* stated that the intermingling of Trika Shaivism with Islam led to the emergence of a new cult which came to be called Rishi order, a synonym of Bhakti. The traditions and beliefs of these Rishis were carried forward by the saints, Sufis, seers and poets, he added. The Muslim Rishis in Kashmir, also called Sufis by some, have been a class apart in themselves. During the lively discussion that followed the presentations, it was pointed out that in South Asia there have been two brands of Islam – the Dara Shikoh model, which is tolerant one and the obscurantist and extremist Aurangzeb model. Similarly in Kashmir there have been two models of Islam – the tolerant and humane Nund Rishi model and the

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fundamentalist Syed Ali Hamadani model. Therefore, need of the hour is to revive the indigenous heritage and Rishi movement in Kashmir.

During the III Session, Sh. P.N. Kachroo, the veteran artist and one of the founders of the cultural renaissance in Kashmir started in early 1940s which continued till late 1960s, provided a graphic account of the modern art/cultural movement in Kashmir. The role of Dogri Sanstha in preservation and development of Dogri language, literature and culture was highlighted by Prof. Lalit Magotra of Jammu University. Ravinder Kaul, a prominent film maker and theatre activist from the State, threw light upon the history and growth of theatre movement in Kashmir. Challenges of heritage conservation in Kashmir and Ladakh, were dealt with by Janhwij Sharma, a conservation architect from INTACH and Ms. Aparna Tandon, a trained conservator. As such, the Seminar dealt with both theoretical and practical aspects of the cultural heritage in Jammu and Kashmir.

The seminar adopted the following recommendations in the concluding session on 2 March 2004.

1. The Seminar emphasised the ethno-cultural and religious diversity of Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh. This has been a rich legacy, which should be further developed and enriched through the development of local languages and literature, translation of old and new books through various scripts such as the Persian, Devnagri, Sharda, Punjabi, Dogri, Pahari, Bhoti and others.
2. The seminar resolves that the cultural identities of the State should be depoliticised and any attempt to politicise the identities resulting in divisiveness should be resisted. These identities should be strengthened to promote mutual cooperation, co-existence and harmony. The cultural identities with spirituality at the core should be located and brought back to the public domain.
3. Given the need for promoting eco-cultural tourism in Jammu and Kashmir, the seminar urged the State government to replicate the model of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi shrine Board to cover all important shrines and pilgrimages in the State.

4. Given the spiritual and historical importance of Hari Parvat complex (Srinagar, Kashmir) which has the popular shrines of Gurudwara Chatti Padshahi, Hazrat Makhdoom Sahib and Chakreshwar and other ancient temples, the seminar recommended that this complex should be declared as a world heritage site.
5. The Seminar urged that there should be a central role for public and civil society in heritage recognition, preservation and management.
6. There should be an appropriate legislation to support preservation so that vandalism of art, heritage and treasures is made a criminal offence.
7. The seminar recommended that appropriate steps be taken to preserve and promote the art of papier mache and carpet weaving.
8. The seminar recommended that the Khankah-i-Noorbakhshia at Zadibal and Srinagar be preserved.
9. It recommended that the post-graduate departments of Archaeology, Anthropology and Fine Arts be opened in the Universities of Jammu and Kashmir.
10. It recommended that the existing departments of Archaeology, Museums and Archives in the State government be restructured so that there are separate departments of Archaeology, Museum and Archives under the separate Department of Culture.
11. The mother tongue should be made the medium of instruction at the primary level and adequate textbooks be made available for the purpose.
12. Mubarak Mandi complex in Jammu should be preserved as a vibrant cultural complex.
13. Heritage in making must be regularly documented and preserved.





*Veteran journalist Sat Paul Sahni inaugurating the Seminar cum Exhibition and Workshop by lighting the ceremonial lamp.*



*Ravinder Kaul welcoming the participants in the Inaugural Session. Seated from left are **Aparna Tandon**, Convenor PATH, Jammu; **Ramesh Mehta**, Secretary, J&K Academy of Art, Culture & Languages; **Prof. K. Warikoo**, Secretary General, HRCF; **Prof. Amitabh Mattoo**, Vice Chancellor, Jammu University; **Sat Paul Sahni**, Veteran Journalist; **Mohan Singh**, President, Duggar Manch and **Rajendra Tiku**, Eminent Sculptor.*



*Prof. Amitabh Mattoo going round the Art Exhibition*



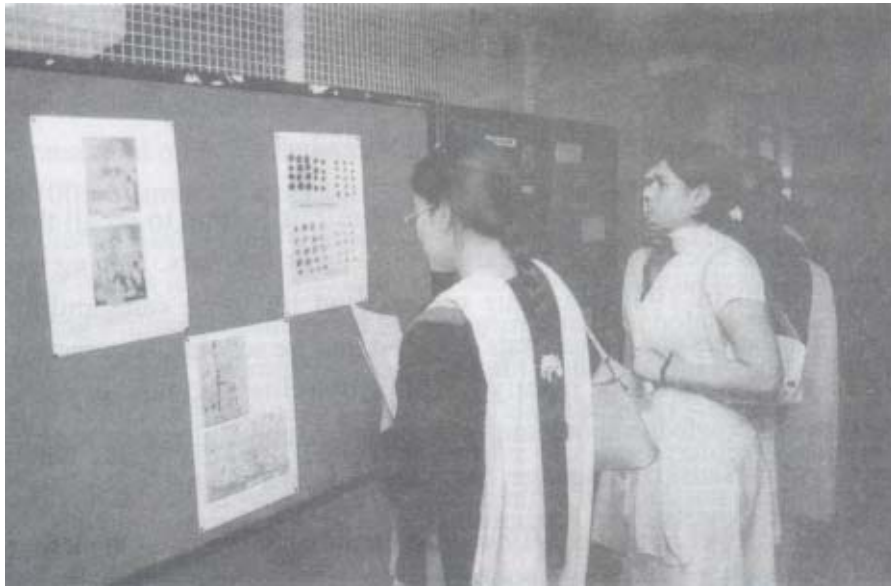
*Dr. Hamid Naseem Rafiabadi (right), Head, Islamic Studies, University of Kashmir presenting his paper, with Prof. Riyaz Punjabi (centre) in the chair.*



*A view of the delegates at the Seminar*



*Aparna Tandon conducting the Workshop  
on Heritage Conservation.*



*Delegates going through the Exhibition*



*Delegates going through the Exhibition*

## BOOK REVIEW

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### WESTERN INDOLOGISTS AND SANSKRIT SAVANTS OF KASHMIR

by S.N. Pandita

Siddharth Publications, New Delhi, 2002, 332pp.

Now that peace is returning to Kashmir, it is time to recall that Kashmir has been a place of learning and great scholars. During the period 1800 to 1950 Kashmir was visited by some outstanding Western scholars and bureaucrats who had intense scholarly interaction with Kashmiri scholars, mostly Kashmiri Pandits, and left behind a treasure of knowledge about language, literature and philosophy mostly contained in Sanskrit language. Sharda was then a scholarly language which gave expression to Kashmiri philosophy and literature.

The book under review is a brilliant work on western Indologists and the Sanskrit savants of Kashmir which S.N. Pandita has described and worked upon very extensively. The contents include the foreword by Dr. Karan Singh, Buhler's visit to Kashmir, Stein's arrival, Stein working with Nityanand Shastri, Rajatarangini, six thousand Sanskrit manuscripts, dictionary of Kashmiri language, Stein's collection of Kashmiri manuscripts, flashes in interface, Chamba inscriptions, the Harvard edition of *Panchatantra*, manual of Kashmiri language, Hatim's tales and Govind Kaul, Lallavakyani, *Mahabharata* manuscript in Prague, alongside the icons, *Nilamatapurana* etc. Seldom has any Kashmiri scholar brought out in recent times union of knowledge between some Kashmiri Pandit geniuses and western indologists of whom the whole of western world can be proud of. In fact the systems of thought of western and eastern world so much identified in this book have brought out the great and perennial scholarship of Kashmir.

The world today needs a refreshing breeze of the thought-provoking ideas produced between the icons of West and the East. Buhler, Stein, Grierson, Vogel and the like have left an imprint on the scholarly history of Kashmir. These icons have discovered in a colonial era some of the icons of Kashmir such as Govind Kaul, Nityanand

## BOOK REVIEW

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Shastri, Ishwar Kaul, Pandit Mukandram Shastri, Professor Jagadhar Zadoo, Pandit Damondar, Pandit Sahaz Bhat, Pandit Anand Kaul etc.

Above mentioned great Kashmiri Pandits have done work on Puranas and other Vedic works, on literature, history, etc. Buhler refers to 300 volumes of works in Sharda script by such Kashmiri Pandit scholars. Alas! We have almost lost the Sharda script. There are hardly any scholars left now who can read and write this priceless language. Among brilliant tributes paid to Kashmiri Pandit scholars, reference is made to Buhler's commendation of Pandit Damodar and Pandit Govind Kaul, his great references to Damodar, his tributes to Kashmiri Pandit works of 9<sup>th</sup> century. Great tributes have also been paid to Professor Nityanand Shastri who deserved much more recognition according to Stein, who taught in an open-air class in S.P. College in 1919, who stood first in English in Punjab University. Govind Kaul and Mukandram helped Stein in preparing *Rajatarangini*. Stein writes about Pandit Damodar that he could be Kalhana's successor, but he died young in May 1892.

Stein says that 19<sup>th</sup> century Kashmiri Pandits were giants of learning. They worked on dictionary of Kashmiri language in 1898 – Ishwar Kaul. Mukandram worked on archaeological studies and died young in 1921. About Pandit Mukandram, Stein says that his death “has been a severe loss to Sanskrit scholarship in Kashmir and will be widely felt whenever in India the cause of its ancient learning and literature is cherished.”

Today, due to unfortunate circumstances of militancy in Kashmir, Kashmiri Pandits have been forced to leave their homes. Militant Islamic forces operating from outside Kashmir have driven out the original inhabitants of Kashmir – the Kashmiri Pandits. It is time that scholars in India and abroad reconstruct and recover the treasures of scholarship left all over which once was produced by the great minds of Kashmiri Pandits and recognised by the great western Indologists. This is where Mr. S.N. Pandita's work is of interest. Pandita is referring to the works of Kashmiri Pandits scholars who as Stein says were giants of learning. These pillars of knowledge should be preserved by the UNESCO, as part of the intellectual heritage of mankind.

## **BOOK REVIEW**

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All of us belonging to the present generation pay our humble tributes to the memory and scholarship of these great Kashmiri Pandits of 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Today some of them if living would be considered for highest literary prize for their profound scholarship. By recovering this glorious past knowledge and interpreting it for world society, we can enrich the world heritage. Professor Paul Muller from USA has recently said that Abhinav Gupta, an exponent of Shaivism for example was the greatest genius that India has produced. This reputation is due to such icons as are mentioned by S.N. Pandita in this memorable book. Therefore, this book will be read with due respect and attention by all those who love Kashmir and its scholarship.

**Prof. S. Bhatt**

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**HIMALAYAN AND CENTRAL ASIAN STUDIES** is a quarterly Journal published by the Himalayan Research and Cultural Foundation, which is a non-governmental, non-profit research, cultural and development facilitative organisation. The Journal is devoted to the study of various issues pertaining to the Himalayan and trans-Himalayan region in South and Central Asia or parts thereof, connected with its environment, resources, history, art and culture, language and literature, demography, social structures, communication, tourism, regional development, governance, human rights, geopolitics etc.

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**CONTRIBUTIONS FOR PUBLICATION AND ANY ENQUIRIES  
SHOULD BE ADDRESSED TO :**

**Prof. K. WARIKOO**

*Editor and Secretary General*

Himalayan Research and Cultural Foundation

B-6/86, Safdarjung Enclave

New Delhi - 110029 (India)

Tel. : 0091-11-26162763, 0091-11-51651969

Fax : 0091-11-26106643

E-mail: [kwarikoo@himalayanresearch.org](mailto:kwarikoo@himalayanresearch.org)

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## **HIMALAYAN RESEARCH AND CULTURAL FOUNDATION**

Post Box-10541, Jawaharlal Nehru University Post Office, New Delhi-110067 (India)

Central Office : B-6/86, Safdarjung Enclave, New Delhi-110029 (India)

Tele: 0091-11-26162763, 0091-11-51651969, Fax: 0091-11-26106643

E-mail: [info@himalayanresearch.org](mailto:info@himalayanresearch.org) Website: [www.himalayanresearch.org](http://www.himalayanresearch.org)