**Margdarshan Resolution: Fact or Fiction**

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April 26, 2023

I came across a statement in “Scoop News,” made by Dr Ajay Chrungoo, Chairman, Panun Kashmir that “The return and rehabilitation of the persecuted Kashmiri Hindus is possible only when Margdarshan Resolution is adopted by the state of India.” As we know, the “Margdarshan Resolution” demands a homeland for the Hindus of Kashmir.

I am aware that this has been the consistent approach of Dr Chrungoo all along. His outlook was the same when he invited me to meet with him at the formerly Jurys Hotel (Now the New Dupont Hotel: 1500 New Hampshire Avenue, N.W. Washington, DC 20036).

When I knocked on the door of his hotel room, he let me in. After greeting me, he immediately placed an order for tea and offered me some sweets which he had already purchased from the local market. We spent a couple of hours together, discussing the history of Kashmir when Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, Sikhs and Christians used to live together. A person no less important than Mahatma Gandhi eloquently elucidated those sentiments in 1947, “While the rest of the country burns in the communal fire, I see a shining ‘Ray of Hope’ in Kashmir only.” I found Dr Chrungoo articulate, intelligent, sharp, a keen observer and very concerned about his community. The interaction turned out to be very informative to know each other’s points of view and provided me with an opportunity to put forth the facts rather than fiction.

Dr Chrungoo expressed his anger and displeasure about the situation in the Valley. He made his inner feelings known to me by saying that Pandits were forced by the majority community to leave their homeland in 1989-1990. He told me that ‘Pandits trusted their Muslim compatriots who let them down.” I told him that we are acutely conscious of the suffering of the Pandit community, and our concern embraces his community and its current predicament.

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The fact is that the Muslim community did not let the Pandit community down. You have so isolated yourselves from Kashmir that not once, have you raised a voice against the barbarities being committed by the Indian army on the civilian population there. We ask you that you release yourselves from the dark mental confinement which bars the sight of your future, I politely countered him. I added that Pandits let themselves be swayed by a chronic mistrust of their Muslim compatriots. They fell into a trap devised by those who do not – and cannot – wish the Pandit community well. Rather than seek an understanding with the leading elements of the Kashmiri Resistance Movement, they became willing victims of a scare campaign carefully plotted by the enemies of the resistance, led by Governor Jagmohan. The brutal forces of Indian occupation wanted you out of Kashmir to misrepresent – indeed, to disfigure – the resistance as an anti-Hindu campaign and also to clear the field for acts of mass slaughter, rape and arson. I doubt that you can be happy with the results. This was a fatal blunder. That is the sad part of the story. The happy part is that the blunder is reversible.

I told him that the time has come for you to extricate yourself from India’s fatal grip and reattach to Kashmir. In Kashmir, you have the same future as your compatriots. In India, you have no future at all. Then Dr Chrungoo put forth before me the plan of a separate homeland for Pandits. I told him that I see in it an attempt on the part of the Government of India to create a state within the state and a ploy to make Kashmir the next Palestine after robbing people of their land and driving a wedge between different communities. These separate homelands can be designed to change the demography of Kashmir. The design seems to invite people from other parts of India and in particular belonging to RSS. No one will know who resides there. The identity of residents cannot be verified by anyone except the government which has the design and the capability of changing the demographics in any manner they choose. After decades, history proved me right when India enacted Domicile Law in 2021 to change the demography of Kashmir.

I pointed out that Kashmiri Pandits have their religious monuments and symbols situated amid the areas of the majority community. If they want their separate homeland outside of majority community areas, how are they going to have access to these monuments and how are they going to protect them? My viewpoint later after years was proved correct when Sunil Shakhdar, former president of Kashmir Samiti Delhi and chairman of S K Foundation, rejected the composite township proposal. He blamed the Central Government for “embarrassing the community by arbitrarily deciding about their fate and the manner in which they would like to go back to claim their homes and hearths in Kashmir.” “We treat the proposal for separate townships with the same disdain while reserving our right to return to the Valley with honour and dignity and with our heads high,” Shakhdar said.

Mr Sanjay Tickoo, Chairman of Kashmiri Pandit Sangharsh Samiti, likewise said that “the separate zones will set a dangerous precedent.” He added, “Wherever there is a minority (community) it should live with the majority.”

I proposed to Dr Chrungoo that the best solution to this dilemma is that the Pandit brethren should return to the Valley and the majority community must open their hearts and minds to give them moral support and a sense of security. The rights and culture of Kashmiri Pandits must be respected and protected at all costs. While I was leaving the hotel room, Dr Chrungoo told me that I must meet with his colleague who stays at the same hotel and who has also come from Srinagar. He called his colleague to come to the room who turned out to be one of the best-known journalists in Kashmir – Yusuf Jameel – who has received so many international awards, including “The International Press Freedom Award” from “Committee to Protect Journalists.” We spend a few more minutes together before saying goodbye to my compatriots – one Muslim and the other a Hindu (Pandit).

Now, let us listen to the saner elements of the Indian public square about the real situation in Kashmir and a possible way forward. Pratap Bhanu Mehta, a contributing editor to the Indian Express published “Sinking Valley” on April 15, 2017, “The roots of the Kashmir problem are deep, and the point should not be to gloat at one government’s failure. The deep gulf between what the Indian state wants and what Kashmiris in the Valley want has always been unbridgeable…It’s a fool’s errand to think that coercion alone will win India Kashmir….for the moment, Kashmir has been lost on Modi’s watch.”

And former Indian Army Chief, General Ved Prakash Malik spoke to Sandip Dighe of the Times of India on April 25, 2017, “It is not solely the task of the Indian army. Conflict resolution has to be done at the political level. A political solution is the final solution.”

Kashmiri leadership has all along suggested that there is no military solution to the Kashmir problem. It is a political conflict and needs to be resolved through peace tripartite negotiations between the Governments of India and Pakistan and the Kashmiri political resistance leadership.

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