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## KASHMIR — CHALLENGE TO INDIAN MUSLIMS

*By*

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**L**AST September as Mayor of Bombay, I was invited to visit Kashmir. Its beauty and the hospitality of its people left a lasting impression on me. At the last public function I attended in Srinagar, I said: "I came to Kashmir with scepticism; I am leaving it with hope."

Being a politician by preference, an Indian by birth and tradition and a Muslim by faith, the strongest impression I carried back with me was that Kashmir was a standing challenge to every patriotic Indian Muslim.

There are forty million Muslims in India. These forty million are an inseparable part of the motherland. Their economic future, their cultural advancement and their human freedom are part and parcel of Indian security, Indian independence and Indian prosperity. Even the most communal-minded of my co-religionists have realised that today not only through their own experience of concrete progress, but also equally emphatically through comparison with the conditions that at present obtain in Pakistan, ten years after achievement of independence.

What has not, however, been adequately realised by Indians of different persuasions, but chiefly by Muslim Indians, is the vital bearing that Kashmir's future has

on the prosperity, security and independence of the nation as a whole and therefore, of the Muslim section within it. Kashmir's inviolable accession to India is a factor that can permanently strengthen the concept of secular democracy more than any other factor in our country.

The Government of India — in my humble opinion after too elaborate an interval of diplomatic hesitation — has after all, announced that the accession of Kashmir to India is "final and complete." It has also indicated more clearly than is its wont usually, that talk of a plebiscite for the determination of the wishes of the people in the matter of accession is of no account as long as Pakistani aggression in Kashmir continues.

It has also been emphasised that if and when the aggressors return to their own country, it will be the Indian Government and the Government of the State that will supervise and conduct such a plebiscite. These announcements as well as the overwhelming success of the recent elections in Kashmir have put heart into our people, including the Muslims.

### "PERMANENT CRISIS"

It has had a different effect, however, upon the Government of Pakistan which requires the Kashmir issue to continue in a condition of permanent crisis for its very existence. No narrow undemocratic group can retain political power in any country for long without the aid of an external hate-object.

With every passing day that stabilises the political relations between the people of Kashmir and the rest

of India, and improves the conditions of all classes of Kashmiris as co-sharers in the benefits of the second Five-Year Plan, it becomes more difficult for the rulers of Pakistan to pretend that Kashmiris, provided they are given the right of choice, will choose Pakistan.

Kashmiris indeed are realising with greater force every day that in the ultimate analysis their own economic, cultural and religious progress depends on firm and permanent association with this great country. Such a development is intolerable to the present leaders of Pakistan. Therefore, in spite of the greater clarity of the Government of India's expressed views and in spite of the achievements of the democratic Government of Kashmir, danger from Pakistan daily increases.

This danger can be perceived not merely in the explosions of Pakistani gun-cotton slabs in Srinagar and Jammu, and similar incidents some time ago near Delhi's Jumma Masjid, but also in the aggressive turn that propaganda has taken both within Pakistan itself and on behalf of Pakistan in the reactionary section of the foreign press. It will be foolish on the part of the Indian people or their Government to dismiss the new note of desperate hate in recent Pakistani propaganda as mere drum-beating.

It is complementary to Mr. Suhrawardy's mission to London and Washington. It is an indication that the Government at Karachi may try to force the hands of its benefactors and pact-partners by resort to action similar to that of September 1947. It is this situation which, in my opinion, sharpens Kashmir's challenge to Indian Muslims and squarely lays the weight of a great national task on their shoulders.

The forty million Muslims of India are here today because they rejected the irrational Two-Nation Theory at the time of the partition of the country; but rejection of the theory, by them, is of little account if they do nothing to counter the activities of the leaders of Pakistan who are desperately trying to make more mischievous use of the theory than even in the days of the late Mr. Jinnah.

Pakistan's claims on Kashmir, the efforts of its Government to amass foreign sympathy, and the whole logic of Mr. Feroze Khan Noon's legalisms before the Security Council all stem from the Two-Nation Theory.

#### UNITED WILL

The challenge that Kashmir poses to the Muslims of India is to proclaim with a united will — so that all the world may hear and understand — that Indian Muslims have decided that Kashmir is no longer anyone else's business but India's own and that they will not permit the unity of their country, achieved through the accession of Kashmir, to be disturbed by any foreign government or band of international propagandists.

The accession of Kashmir, it is true, was achieved formally by the signature of its ruler; but what Pakistan and the world outside have to be made to realise is that the reality of this accession resides in the unity of the people of Kashmir and the people of India, particularly the Muslims, and their indestructible loyalty to the concept of a democratic and secular India in which every faith is equal in the eyes of law.

It is only emphatic insistence on the emotional and economic reality of accession and explicit expression of views by leading Muslims in India in favour of it that will deter the short-sighted leaders of Pakistan from resorting to further adventures as a way out of the desperate internal situation there. If they are not clearly told that any further resort to aggression will find millions of Indian Muslims at the very head of the forces that will rise to defend Kashmir — which is, as Mr. Krishna Menon, India's Defence Minister, said the other day, as much part of India as Bombay — they will continue to pretend if not to themselves, at least to their friends abroad that what they are demanding is self-determination for the Muslims of Kashmir and, therefore, by implication, of India.

#### SERIOUS TASK

The urgency lays the very serious task on the Muslims of India to bestir themselves and to assert that as citizens of India, who have a special responsibility in regard to Kashmir, they will not permit anyone to question the validity of the present sovereignty of India in Kashmir because that sovereignty expresses more than anything else the Indian Muslim's right of self-determination.

To this end I whole-heartedly support the recent suggestions put forth from Bihar by Mr. Ansari and from Delhi by Maulana Ahmed Sayed for a Convention of Indian Muslims which will, once for all, silence the babbling of Pakistani propagandists who strive to confuse the world with slogans of sub-continental Muslim communalism.

I sincerely hope that such a gathering will take place as early as possible. It can serve as a turning-point in the Kashmir controversy because, if it is sufficiently representative of patriotic Muslims from all parts of India including Kashmir, it can once and for all put an end to the use of the Two-Nation Theory by Pakistan in the Kashmir controversy.

[ *By courtesy of the* TIMES OF INDIA ]

## **KASHMIR AND INDIAN MUSLIMS**

*By*

**Maulana Ahmed Syed**

*Vice-President, Jama'at-ul-ulema, Delhi*

**P**AKISTANI propaganda in connection with Kashmir is daily becoming more aggressive. Apart from spreading false reports about conditions in Kashmir, not a day passes without some leader or newspaper in Pakistan demanding Jihad against India. The Government of India is right in not taking serious notice of such lies nor in replying in kind. Kashmir is not a closed country and conditions there can be judged by every one. But unfortunately every foreigner or every Indian cannot visit Kashmir and judge for himself; and false propaganda is always designed to confuse the unwary.

The hands of a Government like ours are tied by moral bonds. But that does mean that the people should not make an effort to voice their feelings on this issue as emphatically as possible so that all victims of Pakistani propaganda in every part of the world may become aware of our united intention and will to save the people of our most important frontier State from further aggression and to release as early as possible those parts of our country that are at present under Pakistani occupation.

In this task the four crores of Indian Muslims have a great part to play.™ Indeed if they do not play that part they will be betraying the principles they have stood for all their lives. It is true that not much headway has been made by Pakistani propagandists in Kashmir



itself. But elsewhere, the comparative silence of Muslim Indians on the Kashmir question is made to look like indifference. This impression should be removed because it is not true. Most thinking Muslims of this country are convinced that the people of Kashmir can prosper and thrive only as citizens of free India. If they have not been vociferous about their conviction it was chiefly due to a belief that the Kashmir problem is essentially a legal problem and that justice and constitutional rectitude being on our side, there is no need for the mobilization of public opinion specially amongst the Muslim masses of India. This I believe is a totally wrong approach.

#### DEFEAT FOR PAKISTAN

Every time the Government of Pakistan has gone to the U.N. every time a representative of the U.N. has come to this sub-continent to 'investigate' the problem, the result has been a big or a small defeat for Pakistan. The last such experience was the visit of Mr. Jarring of Sweden and the report submitted. The fact that in spite of the good offices of Pakistan's many patrons amongst powerful imperialist countries, the findings of U.N. bodies have always been embarrassing to the rulers of Pakistan, have somehow helped to create a sense of smugness in India. What all Indians and Indian Muslims, particularly, should remember is that the leaders of Pakistan have never sincerely believed in the truth or justice of their case and that they have always used the U.N. as a convenient cover for dangerous conspiracy and mischief.

This can be gathered from the difference between the propaganda conducted by the Government of Pakistan abroad and its internal propaganda. While abroad

they pretend to be on the defensive against India and demand help from U.S.A. and Britain, in the Pakistani Press itself the appeal to the people is always to resort immediately to violence and to conquer India. Not long ago a Karachi newspaper which claims to have been founded by the late Mohammad Ali Jinnah, wrote in its editorial article:

“We are the deadiest enemy India can possibly have and it would be foolish for us not to take advantage of the foreseeable deluge that will ensue after him (Nehru). In the meantime, we shall do our worst, God willing.”

These provocative appeals to an excitable people such as those of Pakistan can lead to tragedy on big-scale any time. Such tragedy can be prevented only if the propagandists of Pakistan are made to realize that any raid or attack on any part of India that they may provoke would meet with passionate and universal resistance by the people of this country in which the Muslims of India will be in the vanguard. The building of this sense of resistance is a task in which the leaders of Indian Muslims should play a most important role. It is a national task in which Muslims belonging to all political parties and all classes should proudly join.

It is in my opinion high time that some of us should take the initiative in calling a convention of Indian Muslim leaders and others at which a programme designed to increase the sense of resistance of Indian citizens to Pakistani aggression can be drawn up and organized work amongst the masses initiated. What should never be forgotten is that a fairiy large northern part of our country is under occupation today. For ten

years the rulers of Pakistan have tyrannized the poor and illiterate population of a considerable area in Kashmir, the majority of whom are Muslims. With the passage of time the virulence of this tyranny has only increased.

### REIGN OF TERROR

The people of Poonch, for instance, during the last four months, have been submitted to a veritable reign of terror, following the arrest of an individual for a crime by the puppet "Government" of the occupied part of Kashmir. While this ruthless suppression was going on, not one member of that "Government" dared to visit Poonch. Houses were razed to the ground, martial law was imposed and the Punjab Constabulary ruled the area in the manner of the Nazis.

In Bagh, Bari, Pullandri and Saraswah many freedom-loving Kashmiris are rotting in concentration camps. Not long ago villages in Malot and Haveli tehsils were pillaged by what is called the "Azad Kashmir Police," but what in reality is a force consisting of goondas enlisted in West Punjab. Important political workers like Syed Husan, Buggal Khan, Abdul Aziz Maloti, Captain Feroz Khan and others, who are in a concentration camp, were beaten up cruelly because they dared to voice the grievances of the inmates of the camp which required 1,800 gallons of water a day but got only 800. Women have been arrested and insulted and ill-treated.

Such cases are only numerous. But they are only to be expected by an unfortunate people who are under military rule. Indians, and the Muslims amongst them

especially, should not forget their fate. Denied all democratic rights, they are languishing in misery because a group of Pakistani leaders have decided that the empire the British gave them should include Kashmir also. I have mentioned these specific cases only to drive home into the minds of our easy-going countrymen the necessity for a general awakening of the social conscience of this country so that, as citizens enjoying the benefits of true freedom we may strive to do our bit by our brothers who are in serious trouble and proclaim to a misinformed world that the Government of India has decided to defend Kashmir at all costs not because it is a matter of prestige but because every Indian and particularly every Muslim in this country will insist on such defence and offer to lay down his life for its sake.

#### PUBLIC OPINION

The organization of public opinion in this behalf is a sacred task that our patriotism and our faith demands from us. In that task all can and must unite. In all my long public life I do not remember to have placed before the public or supported a more vital and urgent issue.

It is urgent because in proportion to the Pakistan Government's disappointment over what has happened in the Security Council, efforts are being made by its leaders to whip up frenzy and hire mischief-mongers. Mr. Suhrawardy is going to Washington to finally lay before the U.S. President his case and perhaps to secure American permission to resort to violence. Whatever may be the American attitude we in India who cherish our freedom and want our brothers now in the occupied

part of our country also to enjoy that freedom, cannot afford to be passive. We must bestir ourselves in the cause of the security of our country and international justice and fairplay.

[ *By courtesy of the* HINDUSTAN TIMES ]



