**The Kashmir Saga: From Well-being to Hell-being**

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Today, the partition of 550 sovereign princely states ruled by local monarchs in the subcontinent are enjoying the fruit of independence. On the contrary, the land of Kashmir has been destined for a myriad of woes. The heaven-like-land is being sandwiched between escalating tensions of India and Pakistan. Historically, there have been tall claims to sort out decades-long saga by India, Pakistan and the UN Security Council but there have not yet been any practical manifestation. There seem no clue of its resolution as the issue is increasingly being deepened and tensions are more prolonged by two nuclear powers.

This piece aims to juxtapose Kashmir in the past with present-day Kashmir, which has been inflicted with endless miseries; calling the UN to look into the matter.

If we look upon the subject of Kashmir for being an earthen paradise, there is no denying the fact that it was hugely enriched with its geographical entrancing beauty and heavenly attributes. It was undoubtedly the land of paramount importance filled with a fascinating natural vista of beautiful lakes, streams, a panorama of snowy mountains, lush green trees, entrancing blue sky, beautiful species of Birds, rare breeds of sundry animals, various seasons with pleasant environment and much more. It popularly is deemed as “paradise on earth.”

Additionally, the hygienic air, pleasant climate, lush green trees and clean potable water are the very elements that make the land “paradise on earth.” While describing the nature of Kashmir, Mirza Waheed, in his book “The Book of Gold Leaves” borrows the words from Mir Zafar Ali who describes the crystalline purity of water. He wrote: “The gem-clear water of the lake near Sri Nagar is termed as the “nectar of Paradise.”

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Dolefully speaking, the present-day Kashmir stands strikingly different from the perceptibility of its past. The havoc that has been wreaked in the land makes no sense of Kashmir in actuality. Its ecological beauty has reached the verge of extinction and aquatic life is largely at risk. Its climate is polluted due to the surplus use of guns and machines, which is why the greenery is destroyed altogether.

The Kashmir-based author, Waheed, in his first novel “The Collaborator” delineates a vivid desecration of nature when an encounter kicks off between India and Pakistan. He opined, “The Pakistanis were pounding a mountain pass some distance away, the Indians were replying in kind. There would be blood, and sulfur, on the trees. Dark plumes of smoke would emerge from the green canopies. Pines, those majestic umbrella pines, would be broken, their spectacular dark green spreads turning to umbrellas of crumbling flame, smoke and ash.”

Moreover, clean drinking water is the basic necessity for wellbeing on this planet, but a distinguishing individuality of Kashmir (wonderland of the earth). Yet, the land has miserably lagged in preserving its beauty with major lakes and rivers. Accordingly, in “War in Kashmir and its Effect on the Environment” (1998), Jennifer Crook revealed, “Major lakes and rivers in Kashmir harbour serious diseases due to lack of maintenance, neglect and pollution. Dal Lake…housing hundreds of floating houseboats and home for vast reserves of aquatic life is rapidly shrinking in size. Compared to 15 years ago, the changes which have taken place in the Dal Lake are shocking and drastic in proportion. a new vegetation in the form of a mysterious red weed seen on the periphery of the lake is an indicator of a serious degree of pollution.”

More to add, the avian life also is at great risk. In another novel “The Book of Gold Leaves,” Waheed gave a graphic account that the birds “stopped the racket they’d started soon after the rocket blew a cloud of concrete dust into the air. They have not stayed to compete with the rata-tat of the machine gun.” Currently, rockets fly instead of birds.

Among other things, most appallingly, since 1989, over 100,000 Kashmiris have been executed by Indian forces. According to official statistics, nearly 7,300 people were murdered in Indian custody; more than 23,000 women have been widowed, more than 110,000 children have been orphaned and more than 11,000 women have been raped by Indian occupation forces. In addition, over 7,000 unnamed mass graves have been discovered with thousands of victims. Some 10,000 Kashmiri youth have been injured due to the exponential use of pellet guns. 200,000 additional troops were deployed, which raised the number of Indian occupation forces in the state to 700,000, Jammu and Kashmir became the most militarized zone and dubbed as largest prison in the world today.

Keeping in view the current situation of Kashmir, it is essential to historically look at the beginning of Kashmir’s miseries. On April 21, 1948, the UN Security Council Resolution 47 was adopted concerning the Kashmir conflict, in which Kashmiri people had to decide whether they were going to be part of India or Pakistan through a plebiscite. But, the resistance and recalcitrance of India, despite 11 Security Council resolutions for a free and impartial plebiscite in Kashmir, hampered their way to decide their future.

Ever since it (India) denied its right to self-determination, it has demonstrated the vivid depiction of the litany of civilian mass killings and to extend its illegal occupation, which, under any circumstances, cannot be condoned by human rights watchdog.

Importantly, according to Article 35 referred to in India’s letter is a part of Chapter VI of the UN Charter, which stipulates that the Security Council has the right to investigate any international dispute or situation likely to endanger international peace (Article 34) and recommends appropriate procedures or terms to resolve the dispute (Articles 36, 37 and 38).

To encapsulate, it is now incumbent upon the UN’s concerned bodies to investigate the litany of problems, losses, atrocities perpetrated in the land, and take the action against incessant human violence, humanitarian crisis, ecological disorder, deteriorating water bodies and declining climate. The UN’s concerned body, India and Pakistan cannot absolve themselves from their responsibilities to eclipse a mushrooming high-handedness. They must also play their role to avoid more ecological plight and human losses in the land.

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