

## Response to Rejoinder

With regard to Pradip Bhattacharya's letter in No. 147: Perhaps Mr Bhattacharya did not notice the end note 11, which cites the English translation of *Krittivasa Ramayana* 1 in my earlier book; the Bengali source is cited in that book. Unfortunately the end note for *Krittivasa Ramayana* 2 was inadvertently omitted. Here it is: Nalinikanta Bhattasali ed. *Ramayana-Adikanda* (Dacca: P.C.Lahiri, Secretary, Oriental Texts Publication Committee, University of Dacca, 1936). This translation is by Anannya Dasgupta. See Bhattasali's introduction for an account of the many different manuscripts of *Krittivasa Ramayana*.

What Bhattacharya calls "carefully built theory of lesbian intercourse leading to birth of boneless infant" is not my theory. It is that of the author/s of the first-century *Sushruta Samhita*. See end note 6 of my article in issue No. 146.

**Ruth Vanita, Montana, USA**

I reiterate that the *Krittibas Ramayana* available in West Bengal does not contain this lesbian liaison between Sagara's queens. I do not have access to the 1936 edition from Dacca Ruth Vanita refers to.

**Pradip Bhattacharya, Kolkata**

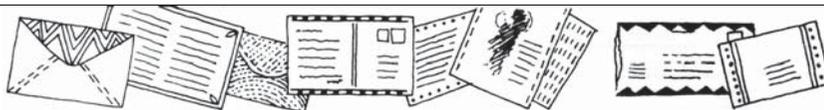
## Right to Livelihood

This refers to Madhu Kishwar's article in issue 147 "Emergency *Avatar* of a secular Goddess!". We do agree with her view point that the hawkers, like anybody else, have a right to livelihood. We are thankful to you for enlightening us on this issue through MANUSHI.

**Pradip Kumar, Jan Kalyan Samiti, Bareilly, U.P.**

## Hypocritical Posturing ?

After reading Madhu Kishwar's article "Democracy as the Best



# Readers' Responses

Antidote to Terrorism" I want to tell here what the minority Hindus think of the Mufti plans. In January 2005 Panun Kashmir, the frontline Kashmiri Pandit organisation, spearheading the struggle for homeland organised a community meet here today. Despite the freezing cold, the representatives of major organisations, leaders associated with national political parties, representatives from various refugee camps and other opinion makers in the community, joined together to deliberate upon the post-poll scenario in the state and its fallout on displaced Kashmiri Hindus.

Soon after assuming power the PDP government announced a policy of applying a "healing touch to the people" of this war-ravaged state. The earlier National Conference Government had pursued patently communal policies to break the resolve of the Kashmiri Pandit community and pave the way for its total expulsion from the State. The large-scale litigation, which this hapless community had to resort to, to redress the wrongs, would shame any civilised government.

Be it the issue of jobs, promotions, service benefits, upgradation of civic amenities in refugee camps, protection of left-over property and shrines or political representation, the sole aim of the NC leadership was to disinherit the community.

Would the new dispensation be different so far as the displaced Kashmiri Hindus are concerned? Not

a single gesture has come so far to convey to the community that the Government cares for its well-being. Panun Kashmir General Secretary, Mr Kuldeep Raina believes the situation remains grim so far as the displaced Kashmiris are concerned. He says the policies pursued by the new government have baffled the common man. On one hand the State Government declares its commitment to usher in good governance, while on the other hand its decision to release the terrorists has led to worsening of the situation on the ground. Similarly, its much-hyped 'healing touch' initiative has bypassed the frontline victims of the ongoing war.

The posturings of the new government on return of Pandits to their homeland have also created doubts. Instead of engaging the popular leadership of Pandits in dialogue, the Government is adopting coercive strategies and dubious methodologies. How come the State Government has come to the conclusion that Kheerbhawani and Mattan villages are safe for Pandits' return? If the conditions are ripe, why should the *maulvi* of a local mosque lead the Pandits to their homes? Was it not the responsibility of the State Government to create conditions for return—establishing law and order, providing political mobilisation on the ground of firm action against vested interests opposed to Pandits' return. The return of Pandits is for tokenist purposes. Without creating

necessary pre-conditions it would ultimately destroy any chance for Pandit's return forever.

**email via Sulekha website**

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### **Bullets, Not Votes!**

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I would prefer that we, the Indian people, fight the Hizbul Mujaheddin & JKLF with bullets, not votes. What do you think the Indian army has been doing in Kashmir for the last two decades? Distributing sweets? Why do you think they have not succeeded over that time with a solely military approach? Left to themselves, the Indian army would have stopped this nonsense long back. Unfortunately, they operate literally with one hand tied behind their backs, thanks both to the machinations of the local Kashmiri Muslims and the soft attitude that the Central government takes towards terrorism. When hardcore terrorists are frequently let go as a sign of 'goodwill', is it any wonder that these terrorists feel emboldened? And what must such actions do to the morale of our Army? And what makes you think that supporting free elections in Kashmir, and getting people to put away their guns and enter the political process, means that the Army is not also going to keep on its actions against terrorists? What peace process are you talking about? These terrorists are STILL continuing their killing activities. Have any of the terrorist organizations such as JKLF, HM and the Hurriyat actually laid down their weapons? Instead, all we have from them are more and more demands and more and more threats if their demands are not met. As for prepending the adjective 'free' in front of 'election'; I believe that requires quite a bit of streeettttcccchhhh.

**email via Sulekha website**

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### **Poking Wounds**

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This is after reading the article "Democracy as the Best Antidote to

Terrorism" by Madhu Kishwar: Most would agree that Madhu's futile propanganda attempts at glorifying the savage islamist, Mufti, are like calling a vicious dog 'fluffy' or 'cuddly'. Anyone would be willing to support a government that made sincere efforts to eradicate militancy. But this government is talebanising Kashmir and the rest of India. Terrorists issue death threats and throw acid on the faces of women to make them wear burkas. It is shocking that the coalition government (UPA) is tacitly supporting the separatist People's Democratic Party and "talibanisation" of Kashmir.

Their idea is to carry out the first lab test of Pakistan's new India policy. This consisted of taking revenge for the defeat in East Pakistan in 1971 by carrying on a low-intensity war against India. Hurriyat's double speak is a class by itself that embodies the strange blend of ridicule and sublime, an art in which the Kashmiri political class is remarkably adept. The Hurriyat's want freedom for receiving arms from their mentors, for militarising their youth, for whipping up religious passion, for contriving the killing of their compatriots, for effecting ethnic cleansing and then for raising a great hue and cry as a victimised lot. Have they not the freedom to do all this? On one hand the state government declares its commitment to usher in good governance, while on the other hand its decision to release the terrorists has led to worsening of the situation on the ground. Similarly, its much-hyped 'healing touch' initiative has bypassed the frontline victims of the ongoing war. The posturings of the new government on return of Kashmiri Pandits have also created doubts.

Notwithstanding Madhu's sleazy and slimy spin, facts on the

ground portray a differently grave picture of old and fresh wounds that have been poked again by Madhu's need to satisfy her strange bed fellows in a bedroom full of smoke screens and mirrors. Madhu belongs in a tent near the border of Jammu and PoK or in the outhouse of Mufti with 24/7 duty to guard his mansion.

**Miriam, via email**

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### **Rewarding Terrorism ?**

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The Muslims of Indian Kashmir and India are never content with the super generosity of the great majority of Indians but repay with more savage killings almost every week. This has been a sure formula for making the savages more savage. Indians are caught in a trap that has got the security forces facing the endless cycle of violence arising out of Mufti choosing to reward the Mufti criminals and punishing the victims - the Pundits. It is no wonder that things are not getting better. We have waited too long. Perhaps, not many know the extent and gravity of their atrocities like slaughter of whole marriage parties - not once but several times, dismemberment of limbs of even fellow Muslims; drugs, the mafia and their criminal activities are spilling out of the Valley thanks to government policies that reward terrorism.

**Seetha Raghavan, via email**

*All I can say in response to these diatribes against my report on the substantial improvements in J&K is that the writers are out of touch with the fast changing ground reality in Kashmir. This is the time for Kashmiri Pandits to work closely with Mufti Mohammad Sayeed's government to reclaim their lost homeland rather than stay trapped in nightmarish fantasies. Such an opportunity may never come again.*

**Madhu Purnima Kishwar** □