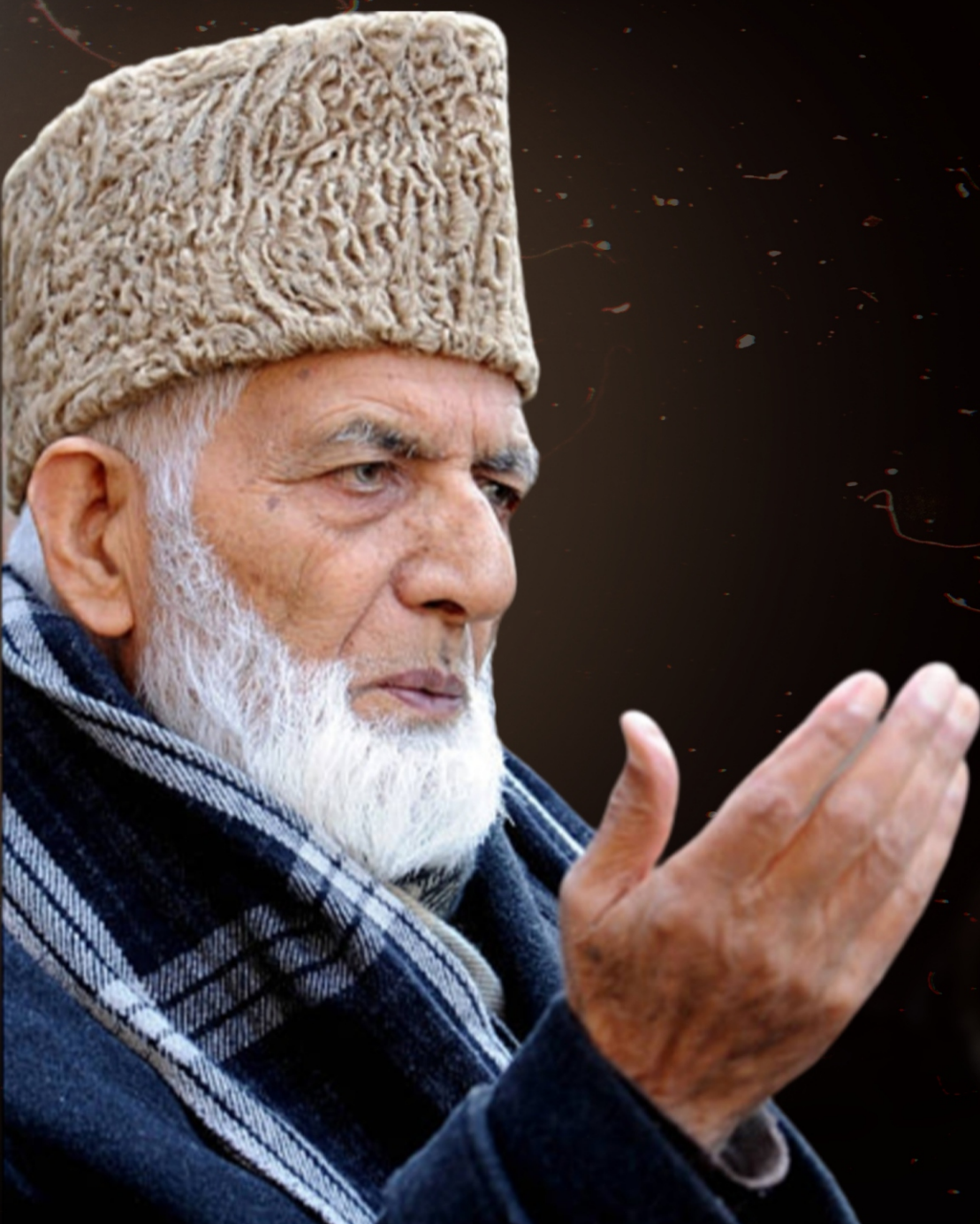




# THE REVOLUTIONARY RESURGENCE



**2024**  
**SEPTEMBER**



In September, we mark the death anniversary of Syed Ali Shah Geelani and honor a titan of resistance whose great spirit became the very heartbeat of Kashmir's struggle for freedom. Throughout his life, Syed Ali Shah Geelani stood as a bulwark against the mighty Indian occupation and refused to bend or break under the weight of oppression. His steadfastness was a way of life—a beacon of hope for all who yearn for justice and dignity across the globe.

Syed Ali Geelani went through the worst that our oppressors could muster. More than half of his life was spent within the cold, unyielding walls of prisons, yet he never showed any slightest signs of fatigue. Even in his final years, confined under strict house detention, his voice remained a clarion call for freedom. Until his last breath, he held firm to his principles, never compromising, never surrendering.

His death, though a great loss, has only strengthened our resolve. Geelani Sahib's spirit continues to inspire every Kashmiri who dreams of freedom, justice, and the right to live with honor. His legacy is a call to action and reminds us that the path to liberation is fraught with challenges, but it is a path we must walk with courage and conviction. We must walk into the footsteps of Syed Ali Shah Geelani and Shaheed Muhammad Ashraf Sehrai, who remained steadfast until their last breath. They have shown us the way forward, and it is up to us to follow them and reject those who succumb under any pressure and instead, draw strength from the example of our martyrs.

Kashmir will be free. This is not a mere hope, but a certainty written in the blood of our martyrs and the prayers of our people. The dawn of freedom will break, and when it does, we will stand victorious, having walked the path laid out by our heroes.

**SYED SALAHUDDIN AHMAD**

*UJC Chief and Supreme Commander of Hizbul Mujahideen*

*Monthly*



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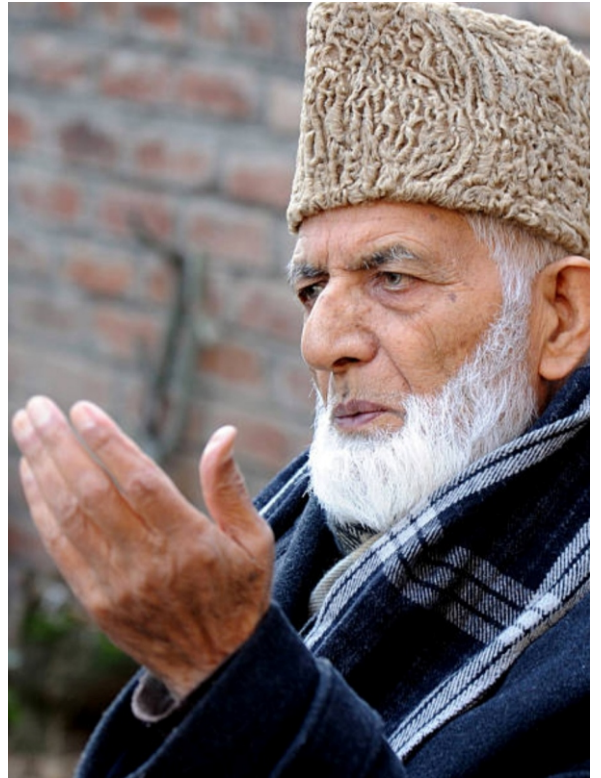
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## EDITORIAL

**O**n September 1, 2021, at the age of 92, Syed Ali Shah Geelani departed from this world, leaving behind a legacy that will inspire Kashmiris forever. For the past 32 years, Syed Ali Geelani's life was marked by continuous imprisonment or house arrest. He was a towering figure, whose influence shaped an entire era. Syed Ali Geelani's name has become a powerful symbol of fight for freedom throughout history. Throughout his life, he never showed any signs of fatigue in his resolve, nor did he falter under the overwhelming pressure and torment of Indian occupying authorities in the region.



Syed Ali Shah Geelani was more than just a political leader; he was a man of courage, truth, and profound wisdom. His friends and foes alike recognized his bravery and intellect and often acknowledge his influence openly. He was not only a master of political strategy but also a remarkable administrator, a captivating orator, a scholar of religion, and the author of more than 20 books. In him, one could see the living embodiment of Allama Iqbal's poetry and the principles of Syed Abul Aala Maududi. Syed Geelani was deeply aware of every form and manifestation of falsehood (batil), which is why, by Allah's grace, he always stood firm. He knew well the cunning and deceit of the fascist Indian state, and some critics labeled him as inflexible, accusing him of being unwilling to negotiate with India. However, this is a gross misrepresentation. Syed Geelani never opposed meaningful negotiations based on solid foundations. He consistently maintained that negotiations could only be fruitful if India recognized Kashmir as a disputed territory and agreed to talks under the framework of UN resolutions. He was clear that as long as India considered Kashmir its internal matter, negotiations would be futile and lead to nothing.

History has proven Syed Ali Geelani's stance correct. Those who participated in

so-called negotiations, from Sheikh Abdullah to Pervez Musharraf, ultimately served India's interests.

Geelani opposed Musharraf on a formula . Syed Geelani reminded him that the people of Kashmir are not sheep to be bargained away by anyone posing as a benefactor. Syed Geelani was a steadfast leader who spent the majority of his life in prisons and behind bars.

Syed Geelani was a firm believer in Pakistan's accession but was also open to any decision made through tripartite negotiations in light of UN resolutions. His famous slogan, "We are Pakistanis, Pakistan is ours," deeply resonates with the people of Kashmir. But the slogan had another part, often recited by Geelani himself: "What do we want? Freedom. What does freedom mean? There is no God but Allah. What does Pakistan mean? There is no God but Allah." This clearly reflected his ideological commitment to Pakistan.

Renowned journalist Hamid Mir, who knew Syed Geelani closely, described his love for Pakistan and its people, stating that Geelani never took dictation from Pakistani rulers. Kashmiris, he wrote, are currently facing a difficult time, but this will pass, and history will record that Syed Ali Shah Geelani was the man who stood against all odds and fought the enemy's conspiracies until the very end. What pained Geelani the most were not the enemy's plots but the betrayals from within. For the sake of Pakistan and the freedom movement, he remained silent, but history will not remain silent.

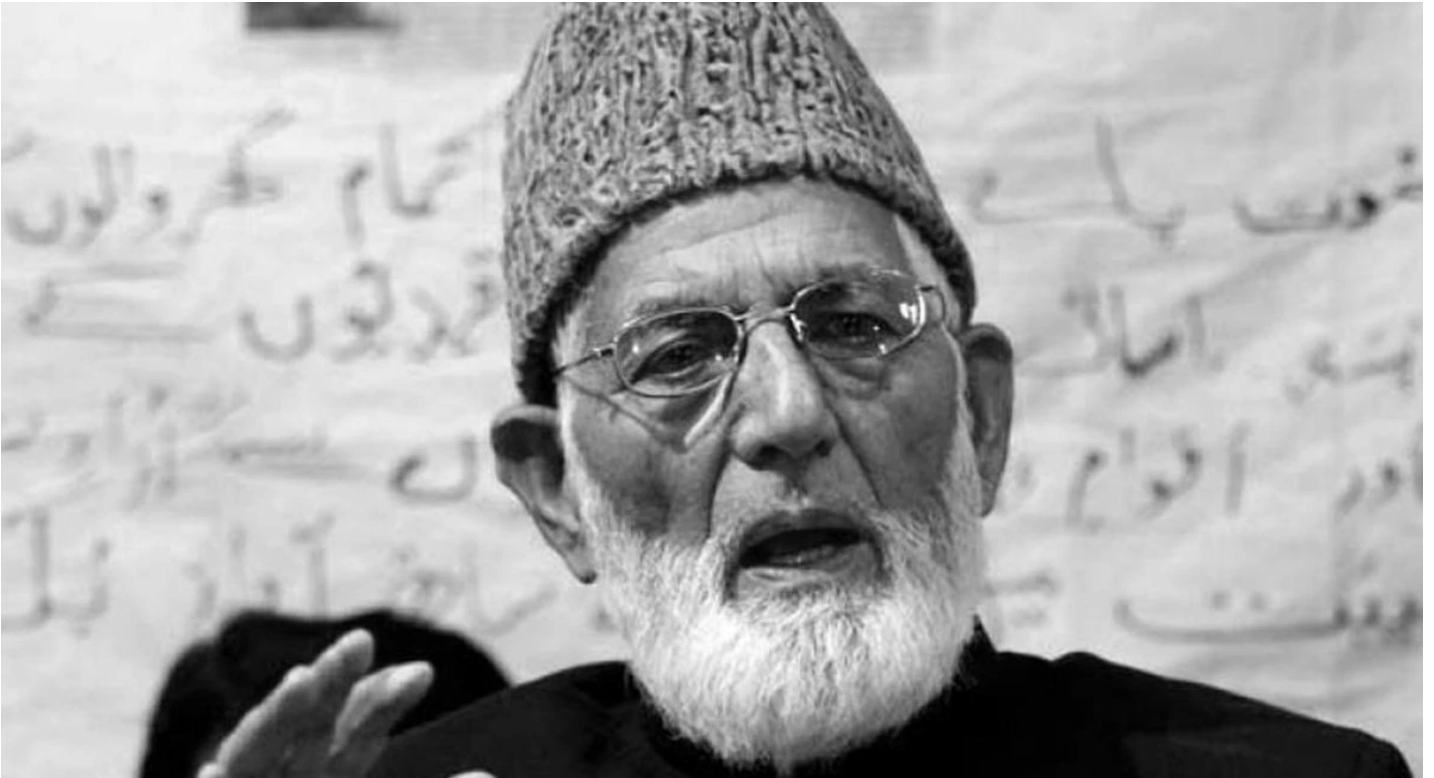
Geelani's departure from this world was as defiant as his life. The cowardly enemies stormed his house, assaulted his family members, and then forcibly abducted his lifeless body. In the darkness of night, without his family present, they buried him in the Hyderpora graveyard, posting guards around his grave. A curfew was imposed across the valley for several days, and to this day, the graveyard remains under military watch, with no one allowed to approach it.

Like the family of Imam Hussain, Geelani's body was desecrated, but those who thought his struggle had ended were mistaken. The struggle continues, and the battle between truth and falsehood will persist until the doomsday. The fight Syed Geelani led will continue, and it will ultimately triumph, InshaAllah. Syed Geelani's spirit is now free from the constraints of organizations and representatives; he has become a leader of freedom movements worldwide. His spirit will remain more active in the world than his body ever was. May Allah elevate his ranks and grant success to his ongoing struggle.

Aameen.

# REMEMBERING THE REHBAR-E-INQILAAB: THE GREAT SYED ALI SHAH GEELANI

*Idrees Bhat*

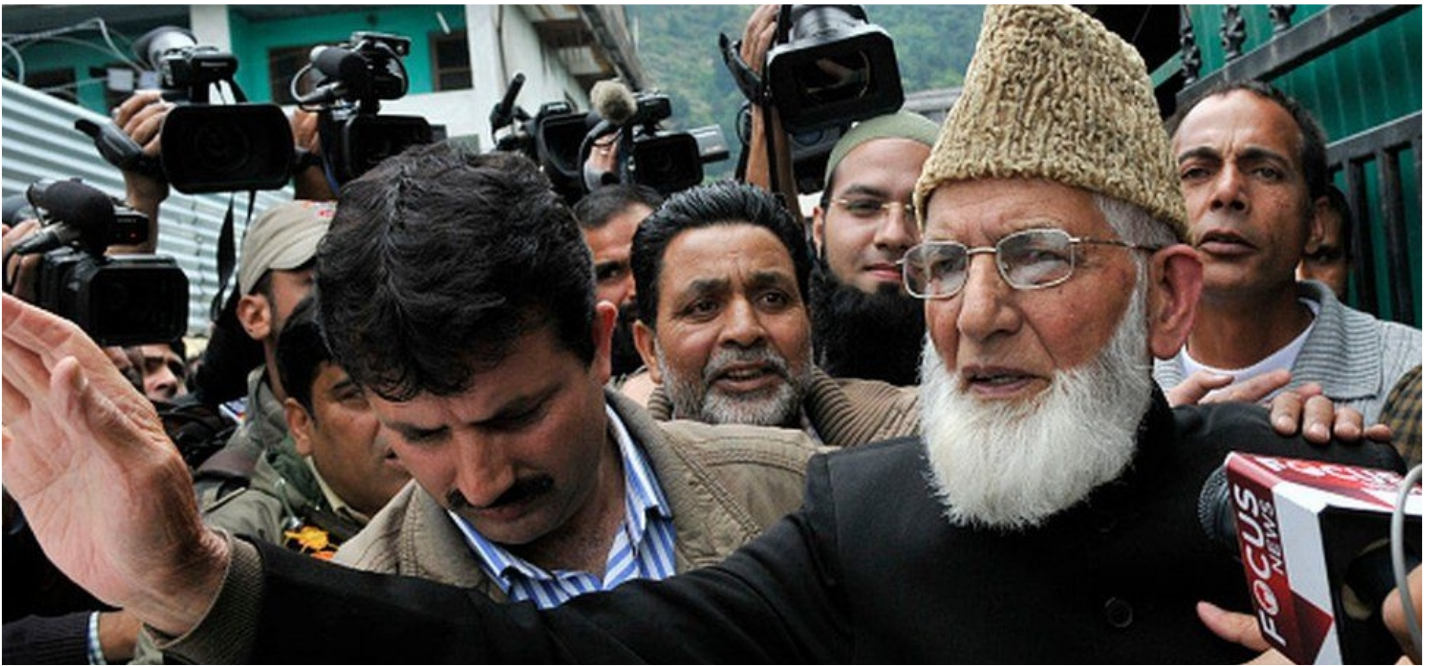


**O**n September 1, 2024, we mark the third death anniversary of Syed Ali Shah Geelani, a figure who stands as a towering presence in Kashmir's modern history, rivaling Sheikh Abdullah in terms of popularity and reverence. While Sheikh Abdullah was once a "popular" leader, Geelani's legacy has arguably eclipsed his, especially when viewed through the lens of integrity, justice, and political struggle.

To many Kashmiris, Syed Ali Shah Geelani was not just a leader; he was a father ("Babb") or beloved ("Toath"), with the latter term particularly used in his native place, Dooru, Sopore. Unlike Sheikh Abdullah, who is often criticized for using his influence to secure power, Syed Ali Geelani remained steadfast in his principles, never seeking personal gain. When he recognized that electoral politics were failing to serve the interests of the Kashmiri people, he chose a different path of resistance against Indian occupation, one marked by resilience, sacrifice, and a relentless pursuit of freedom.

Indian state with its auxiliaries in Kashmir, since past many decades, have run a smear campaign against the character of Syed Ali Geelani. However, Kashmiris very well knew what he





stood for and why the occupier was so desperate to label him and construct different malicious narratives to defame him among his own people. Not just Kashmiris, Syed Ali Geelani was admired by his opponents and enemies for the character and integrity that he had.

Syed Geelani continued to fight for the cause of his people with great clarity and dedication. He never compromised on his principles no matter the situation. He rejected directives from Pakistan's rulers, including the powerful military general Pervez Musharraf, and paid a heavy price for his defiance. Geelani was sidelined, stripped of his membership in the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and replaced by Mirwaiz Umar Farooq. Yet, instead of bowing to pressure, Geelani continued to offer Pakistan his advice on domestic and foreign policy, asserting his independence as a leader.

Geelani's stature transcended borders. He was, in essence, an ideological giant, arguably second only to Muhammad Ali Jinnah in the history of Pakistan. Many people in Kashmir and Pakistan consider him as the "Ideological father of Pakistan". His vision extended beyond Kashmir and Pakistan; he was pro-Afghanistan, pro-Iran, pro-Saudi Arabia, pro-Turkey, and, above all, pro-Muslim Ummah. Geelani believed in the concept of one Ummah and rejected the narrow confines of territorial nationalism based on race, ethnicity, or language. For him, Pakistan's role in Kashmir was vital, not because of geographical proximity, but because it was born in the name of Islam and has a historical stake in the Kashmir conflict. For any Kashmiri seeking a unified Ummah, the path naturally led through Pakistan.

Some young Kashmiris may wonder how Syed Geelani, with his global outlook, remained a staunch guardian of Kashmiri identity and rights. Syed Geelani himself answered this through his beliefs and actions. He drew inspiration from Islamic history, where conquered or ruled territories maintained their traditions and cultures, except those that violated fundamental



Islamic principles. This respect for cultural diversity is evident in how different the Muslims of Malaysia and Indonesia are from those of Arabia and Kashmir. Geelani's approach was straightforward: Kashmiri Muslims, as the primary victims of Indian oppression, should be the ones leading the resistance and deciding its course. They should be at the forefront, with Pakistan's role being one of support, militarily, politically, diplomatically, and morally. He firmly rejected any dictation or interference from Pakistani leadership, including the jihadi factions.

While Syed Geelani remained steadfast till his last breath, his death gave birth to a new era where betrayals run supreme. It is heartbreaking to witness how some who once stood as champions of freedom, resistance, and religion have crumbled under the pressure of the state. Their resilience, once admired, deflated after just a few months or years of imprisonment. In stark contrast, Geelani and his close associate, Muhammad Ashraf Sehrai, led the movement with unwavering courage, even as their lives and families were under constant threat. Both men ultimately died under imprisonment, an active form of resistance.

Kashmiris revered Geelani and elevated him to the status of the tallest leader, not because of his name, caste or ideology, but because of his unshakable commitment to the people's movement. He protected this cause



with his life, made immense sacrifices, gave hope to the oppressed, led from the front, and shook the mighty Indian state. Those who deviate from this path of righteousness, who abandon the cause of freedom, should be rejected. The legacy of Geelani demands nothing less than total devotion to the struggle for freedom. Any compromise is a betrayal, and those who falter must be cast aside, for the cause is greater than any individual or party.

Geelani's vision is now clearer than ever and resonates far and wide across the hearts of Kashmiri Muslims. Even those who once opposed him now concede that Geelani could foresee the grim future awaiting his people. His words and speeches have become a staple on social media, touching countless lives and reminding people of the leader they deeply miss.

Syed Ali Geelani predicted what many deemed impossible at the time a scenario where the Indian state would push for the ethnic cleansing and systematic extermination of Kashmiri

Muslims. His predictions came at a time when there was no sign of the BJP's rise to power. Yet, Geelani understood that it didn't matter which party controlled the center. For him, the Indian state would never tolerate a Muslim-majority region near its borders, regardless of

which political party was in power. This stood in stark contrast to India's national interests as perceived by its ruling class.

Syed Ali Geelani compared the Congress Party to a tortoise, slow but steady in its approach, while the BJP moved like a rabbit, swiftly implementing its agenda. The depth of Geelani's understanding of the situation was so profound that those opposed to him did everything in their power to undermine his leadership within his organization. They infiltrated his ranks, corrupted those around him, and launched campaigns to discredit him. In this betrayal, there was only one man who stood steadfastly by Geelani's side-Muhammad Ashraf Sehrai, a symbol of resistance, sacrifice, and integrity.

After Geelani's death, the occupiers may have felt a sense of relief, believing that a formidable obstacle in their path had finally been removed. Yet, their relief is tempered by a lingering fear, a fear of the legacy Geelani left behind, embodied in the devoted cadre, disciples, and countless admirers who continue to carry his torch. This is why the state launched a relentless campaign against them, jailing, killing, harassing, and silencing hundreds. But deep down, they know that Geelani's legacy has been forged like a brick in the kiln, hardened by the fires of resistance and sacrifice.

The occupiers understand that their attempts to silence us are temporary at best. They know they cannot extinguish the flame of freedom that Geelani ignited. We will march forward with the flag of freedom held high. We are committed to taking his movement to its logical conclusion and offer everything we have, our lives, our children, our wealth to achieve this goal. There is no turning back from Geelani's cause, no matter how our allies behave. Our loyalty lies not with any state, but with the martyrs and their graves. Their sacrifices have bound us to this path, and we will honor their memory by seeing this struggle through to the



end. The cause of freedom is our only destination, and we will reach it, no matter how our allies behave. Our loyalty lies not with any state, but with the martyrs and their graves. Their sacrifices have bound us to this path, and we will honor their memory by seeing this struggle through to the end. The cause of freedom is our only destination, and we will reach it, no matter the cost.

To conclude, I urge every admirer of Geelani, those who remember him on his anniversary and throughout the year, to pay true tribute to his legacy by walking in his footsteps. The greatest honor we can offer is to remain steadfast on the path he set for us, to uphold the promises we made to him. We must continue to fight for our dignity and freedom with every breath, pressing forward with all forms of resistance, including armed struggle, to expel the occupiers from our land. And let us never forget, we still have a journey to make to his grave. We still owe these two great men a funeral.





# WHAT DOES THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PEACE MEAN TO PEOPLE FROM OPPRESSED LANDS?

*Zakir Hussain Bhat*



**O**n the International Day of Peace, observed annually on September 21, the world takes a moment to reflect on the importance of peace and conflict resolution. However, for the people of Kashmir, peace remains an elusive dream, buried under decades of conflict, oppression, and a struggle for self-determination that has yet to see justice. Kashmir is recognized by the United Nations as a disputed territory—a status that remains largely ignored by the international community and overshadowed by geopolitical interests.

The roots of the Kashmir conflict date back to 1947, when the British Raj partitioned the Indian subcontinent into two independent nations: India and Pakistan. Kashmir, a princely state at the time, was given the choice to join either country or remain independent. The Maharaja of Kashmir, Hari Singh, a Dogra Hindu, chose to accede to India against the will of the population who were predominantly Muslim. However, this accession was contested by Pakistan and Kashmiris, leading to the first of several wars over the region and solidifying its status as a flashpoint of conflict between the two nuclear-armed neighbors.



Over the decades, Kashmir has been a witness to extensive human rights violations committed by the Indian military and paramilitary forces. The numbers are staggering: hundreds of thousands of Indian troops are stationed in the region, making it one of the most densely militarized zones in the world. Since 1947, and more intensively since 1989 when an armed struggle was started by Kashmiris, the people of Kashmir have gone through unimaginable suffering. The armed struggle was partly a response to the crushing of democratic aspirations by the Indian state, which rigged elections and installed puppet governments that failed to represent the will of the Kashmiri people.

The Indian military's actions in Kashmir have been brutal. Tens of thousands of Kashmiris have been killed, often with impunity. Reports of enforced disappearances, extrajudicial killings, and mass graves are common. Over 10,000 cases of enforced disappearances have been documented, with families still searching for their loved ones. The use of rape as a weapon of war by Indian occupying forces is another horrifying aspect of this conflict, with countless Kashmiri women subjected to sexual violence during night raids, crackdowns and CASO's (Cordon and Search Operations). The situation is so dire that the people of Kashmir live in a constant state of fear and their daily lives are overshadowed by the threat of brute violence.

On August 5, 2019, the Indian government, led by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), unilaterally abrogated Article 370, stripping Kashmir of its semi-autonomous status. This move was widely condemned, both within India and internationally. Following this abrogation, a severe lockdown was imposed on the region, accompanied by mass arrests, a communication blackout, and a strict curfew. While the restrictions were officially lifted after several months, a de facto curfew still continues in various shapes and forms. The abrogation also paved the way for a dangerous settler colonial project, with new laws allowing non-Kashmiris to buy land in the region, thereby threatening to alter the demographic composition of Kashmir permanently.

This demographic engineering is seen by many as an attempt to change the Muslim-majority character of the region. It is no secret that the faith of the inhabitants of this region is under direct assault from the Indian state. Land is being seized under various pretexts, homes and businesses are being demolished, and anyone who dares to speak out against the state is silenced, often violently. The media in Kashmir has been muzzled, with journalists routinely harassed, detained, or worse, under the pretext of "national security". In this climate of fear and repression, the very idea of peace seems like a cruel joke.

The United Nations, which has passed no less than 18 resolutions on Kashmir, has failed

to enforce a single one. These resolutions call for a plebiscite to allow the Kashmiri people to decide their own fate—a promise that has been reneged on time and again. The international community, distracted by its own interests and wary of antagonizing India, has largely turned a blind eye to the ongoing atrocities. The world's failure to act is not just a political oversight; it is a moral failing of colossal proportions.

On this International Day of Peace, Kashmiris will, like they have always, tell India that peace cannot be imposed through the barrel of a gun or the crushing of a people's legitimate aspirations but what about those world institutions and people who observe this day enthusiastically? Injustice anywhere in the world is a threat to peace to everywhere. It should not be all about the peace around yourself or in certain geographical spaces. The powerful institutions across the globe and nation states that were built on the principles of justice and liberation must introspect as to why they failed the people of Palestine and Kashmir.

The people of Palestine and Kashmir have been fighting the forces of evil since decades. Their struggle is not just against occupying forces but against the silence and apathy of a world that has chosen convenience over justice.

The issue of Palestine and Kashmir is a litmus test for the international community's commitment to human rights and peace. If the world continues to ignore these regions, the very principles that the International Day of Peace stands for—freedom, justice, and dignity for all—are rendered meaningless. It is high time that the world takes a stand, not just in words but in actions, to ensure that the people of such god forsaken lands can live in peace, with the freedom to decide their own future.

# OF GRAND RALLIES AND LONGEST FLAGS IN KASHMIR

*Samreen Khanday*



In the grand tradition of "freedom," there's something particularly heartwarming about students and teachers rallying under the watchful gaze of armed forces. It's a celebration of independence that, oddly enough, requires a military escort—because nothing says "liberty" quite like being forced to wave the flag of your occupier.

This year, the mighty Indian military and police in Jammu and Kashmir outdid themselves. They decreed that every government school, teacher, and student should enthusiastically organize large rallies and hoist the Indian tricolor in a show of "patriotism" besides uploading WhatsApp statuses and send screenshots as proof to police officers. Never mind that these festivities were mandated under the gentle encouragement of threats—er, guidance—by the occupying forces. Who needs genuine sentiment when you have a battalion on hand?

Take a moment to appreciate the irony: the residents of an occupied territory celebrating the independence of their occupiers. It's a bit like asking the foxes to organize a party in honor of the hens' liberation day—right before they get back to raiding the coop. The

occupied waving the occupier's flag; it's the kind of poetic justice that really puts the "force" in "reinforcement."

One could draw inspiration from history. Consider the Soviet Union's warm tradition of ensuring that its satellite states "enthusiastically" celebrated Soviet holidays. The citizens of East Germany, Hungary, and Poland could surely sympathize with the Kashmiris—marching in parades, waving flags, and mouthing patriotic slogans they were taught at gunpoint. And just like the Soviets, the Indian authorities in Kashmir seem to believe that true love for a nation can be cultivated with a combination of coercion, surveillance, and a few armored vehicles.

Let's not forget the teachers, those noble educators who traded chalk for a crash course in nationalism. Imagine the enthusiasm they must have felt, knowing that their careers—and perhaps a bit more—depended on how well they orchestrated these shows of loyalty. And the students, well, they learned an invaluable lesson in civics: that participation is less about choice and more about survival. You know, a life skill that's definitely transferable to the real world.

But here's the thing about power—especially power that's built on fear and compulsion: it has an expiry date. Empires rise and fall, and those who rule by the sword often forget that the blade eventually dulls. Forcing allegiance may win you a parade or two, but it doesn't win hearts. History has a funny way of reminding occupiers that true loyalty cannot be extracted under duress, no matter how many flags you force someone to wave.

So here's to the spectacle of occupied independence, to the rallies of coerced celebration. May they serve as a reminder that while you can march a people to the beat of your drum, you can't make them dance to it forever. Because the flags might be hoisted high, but when they're put away, the only thing left fluttering in the wind is the inevitable tide of change.



# THE WAR FOR HEARTS AND MINDS: IDEOLOGICAL DOMINATION IN KASHMIR

*Saifullah Kakroo*



In today's world, the most destructive form of warfare is not fought with guns and bombs, but with ideas and beliefs. Nations employ various strategies to subjugate and control others, but the most insidious of these is ideological warfare—a silent, relentless assault on the minds and souls of the oppressed. In this type of war, non-military means are wielded with precision to dominate and reshape a people's identity, culture, and values. This war is not fought on the battlefield but in schools, media, and cultural institutions, where thoughts, beliefs, and morals are subtly but systematically manipulated.

Nowhere is this more evident than in Kashmir, where a comprehensive ideological campaign is underway to solidify Indian dominance. Unlike traditional warfare, which targets the physical existence of a people, ideological warfare strikes at their core—attacking religion, culture, and moral values. It aims to strip individuals of their identity, transforming them into mere imitations of their oppressors. This form of warfare seeks to eradicate any resistance by weakening the internal strengths that drive a nation to defend its existence.

In Kashmir, this ideological assault is being executed with the same precision and planning as any military operation. Cultural activities, educational reforms, and the widespread influence of NGOs are the frontline weapons in this war. These organizations work

tirelessly across religious, political, social, and educational fields, aiming to erase the Islamic identity and cultural heritage of the Kashmiri people. Over time, these efforts are designed to ensure that resistance becomes unthinkable, and subjugation is complete.

A key battleground in this war is the educational system. Schools in Kashmir have increasingly become centers of ideological indoctrination rather than places of learning. Cultural activities are frequently organized under the guise of 'cultural awareness,' where students are made to participate in activities that were once alien to Kashmiri society. These include reciting the Indian national anthem "Jana Gana Mana," hoisting the Indian national flag, and even performing dances—acts that are symbolic of a larger effort to reshape the moral and cultural fabric of future generations.

The scale of this assault became glaringly evident in August, when a series of flag marches were organized by military forces across various locations in Kashmir. Schoolchildren, many of them teenage girls, were made to carry the Indian flag and march through streets and marketplaces—a sight that would have been unthinkable just a few years ago. These events, which took place in locations such as SKICC to Dalgate, the Chenab Railway Bridge, Batamaloo, Baramulla, Wusan in Ganderbal, the Martand Temple in Islamabad, Tral in Pulwama, and several others, were deliberate efforts to embed a new identity in the hearts and minds of the young.

In a particularly striking example, over 11,000 girl students participated in what was dubbed the world's largest Kashmiri folk dance (Rouf) at the Sports Stadium in Baramulla. Organized by the Indian Army in collaboration with the civil administration, students from 171 schools participated simultaneously via ICT labs. While the event was celebrated as a cultural milestone, its underlying purpose was clear: to promote a specific narrative and to mold the youth into accepting and internalizing a new identity.

But the ideological war does not stop at cultural activities and education. It extends into the very names and symbols that define the region's identity. Historical names are being changed, erasing the cultural memory of the Kashmiri people. For instance, the iconic Koh-e-Maraan is now being referred to as Hariparbat, and Takht-e-Soliman as Shankaracharya Hill, a move that seeks to overwrite the Islamic history of the region with a new narrative. Similarly, the widespread opening of wine shops in Kashmir—a place where alcohol consumption is traditionally and religiously frowned upon—is another tactic aimed at eroding the moral and cultural values that have defined Kashmiri society for centuries.

Educational initiatives like the Rashtriya Sewa Bharati's Ekal Vidyalaya Abhiyan are further deepening this ideological onslaught. This campaign aims to instill 'Kashmiriyat,'

patriotism, and national duties among Kashmiri Muslims and move them away from any thoughts of resistance. Managed by the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), the initiative has seen a rapid expansion, with over 1,250 schools established in the Valley—an area where over 95% of the population is Muslim. The number of these schools has increased by 53% in just two years, from 800 in 2022 to 1,250. The teachers in these schools, a significant percentage of whom are women, are tasked with shaping the minds of the next generation and ensure that the ideological battle is fought from within the community itself.

Amid this broader ideological struggle, individual cases reflect the shifting dynamics in Kashmir. Mohammad Faisal Makroo, known as Macstar, exemplifies this trend. The son of a business owner from Awantipora, Makroo was born and brought up in Delhi. He gained prominence in the early 2010s for his rap music, which often promoted themes of drug use, alcohol, and relationships. However, by 2021, he pivoted sharply from this image, deleting his old videos and adopting a more pious persona on social media, including undertaking Umrah.

Recently, Makroo re-emerged with a new music video titled "Wanai Wanai," featuring Nikhil, a Jammu-based Kashmiri Pandit, and Shamiska Sharma, a Jammu-based social media influencer and Miss India 2021. This shift back to his previous career, alongside high-profile collaborations, can be seen as part of a broader agenda. Makroo has also been involved with the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and BJP leaders, aligning himself with their ideological framework. These developments illustrate the vast and systematic nature of the ideological warfare being waged in Kashmir. The long-term implications for the region's cultural and religious identity are profound. As the tools of this war continue to shape the thoughts, beliefs, and values of the Kashmiri people, the region stands at a crossroads. The question remains: will the cultural and religious identity that has defined Kashmir for centuries survive this silent siege, or will it be irreparably altered by the relentless tide of ideological domination?



# KASHMIR'S TOURIST DESTINATIONS HAVE BECOME IMMORALITY HUBS

*Zunain Kralpori*



**N**ot long ago, I used to visit with my friends to different tourist destinations. To those places that were crowded with people and also to those destinations that were relatively calm and soothing. One of my friends often used to give Azaan in open meadows and another used to lead the prayers. It was soul soothing. We used to travel in far off places and bath in natural rivulets and lakes.

It is not that any immoral activity did not happen in these places. We ourselves used to see some untoward movement and immediately stopped it. There were other guys who used to patrol and see if things were going in a right direction in most of these places except Gulmarg and Pahalgam where situation was already worse. Then they banned student organizations with Islamic leaning and cracked down on our very faith. Nobody now ventures out voluntarily to stop our society from this moral degradation. And now, all these places have become hubs for extreme immoral activities and unfortunately enough, nobody musters courage to take any steps to stop it. We are seeing teenage boys and girls indulging in intimate scenes, outsiders stalking women and drinking publicly, people doing drugs without any fear. All this is happening

and nobody seems to stop it. Immorality is deliberately spread among the youth of Kashmir. The recent incident in some park is not a single case. Such immorality is rampant now.

The rise of drug use in these areas is particularly troubling, as it points to a deeper social malaise. What's most concerning is the apathy that has taken hold. The moral guardians of society have been silenced, either out of fear or indifference, allowing this degradation to continue unchallenged.

The spread of immorality in Kashmir is not a random occurrence; it is a strategy. In occupied territories, moral corruption is often used as a tool of control. By degrading the youth, the occupiers aim to create a generation that is disconnected, disempowered, and indifferent to the realities of their own oppression. This tactic not only weakens the social fabric but also diverts attention away from more pressing issues, like the ongoing struggle for freedom. It is not that these actions are explicitly organized, but rather that such immoral activities are permitted without any significant restrictions or consequences. This permissiveness is prevalent and allows these behaviors to spread unchallenged. Moreover, no organizations, volunteers, activists, or religious leaders are permitted to oppose or campaign against this moral decay. Any attempts to do so are often suppressed, ensuring that the degradation continues unchecked. We have to ask ourselves a question: How long will we allow this degradation to continue? How long will we remain silent as our cultural values are systematically eroded? The transformation of Kashmir's tourist destinations into hubs of immorality is not just a loss for those who remember better days—it is a threat to the identity and future of the region itself. It is important that we reclaim these spaces, not just for their natural beauty, but for the values they once represented. This requires a collective effort to resist the forces of moral decay and to restore the sanctity of both our lands and our lives.

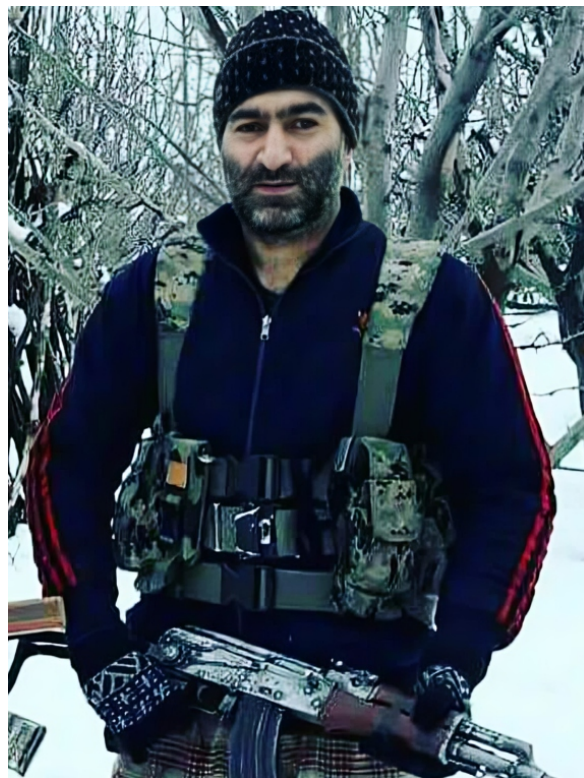
# THE 21-YEAR JOURNEY OF YASEEN ITTOO, ALIAS MAHMOOD GHAZNAVI

*Half a dozen arrests, one false and one true martyrdom.*

**Reyaz Malik**

In 1977, in Chadoora town of Budgam, a child was born into the humble yet devout household of Habibullah Ittoo. They named him Yaseen. Little did they know that this boy would grow up to become a fierce resistance fighter, known as Commander Muhammad Ghaznavi, a name that would strike fear into his enemies' hearts.

On the 13th of August 2017, Yaseen's journey culminated in a fierce gun battle in the fields of Awneera, Shopian, where he was martyred alongside his two other Mujahideen, Sheikh Irfan-ul-Haq and Umar Majeed Bhat. He was just forty years old. His life was not that of an ordinary man. Since joining the ranks



of Hizb-ul-Mujahideen in 1996, Yaseen had spent at least thirteen years behind bars, a prisoner of his convictions. Yet, prison walls could not contain his spirit. Upon release, he would rise again, more determined than ever to pursue the cause he had pledged his life to.

Yaseen's early years were marked by a thirst for knowledge. He began his education at Sheikh-ul-Alam Model School in his hometown of Chadoora, later moving on to Higher Secondary School Nagam, where he completed his twelfth grade. His dream of pursuing higher education remained unfulfilled due to the harsh realities of life. However, during one of his imprisonments, he enrolled at Srinagar's Amar Singh College and completed his graduation.

His father, Habibullah Ittoo, recalls a movement in 1996 when Yaseen crossed the border into Azad Jammu and Kashmir. It was there that he received the training that would prepare him for the long and arduous struggle ahead.

Yaseen spent two years in AJK, honing his skills and preparing for what lay ahead. Upon his return to the Kashmir Valley, he became active in Bandipora for a few months.

However, his path was not without its trials. In November 1998, he was arrested for the

first time, only to be released two months later. But freedom was short-lived. Just twelve days after his release, the Special Operations Group (SOG) from Cargo, Srinagar, raided his home in the dead of night. Yaseen was subjected to brutal physical torture right there, within the walls of his own house, before being taken away by the SOG. This marked his second arrest. Several days later, he was dumped outside the Cargo camp in a near-death state. An auto-rickshaw driver found him and brought him back home. His injuries were so severe that he remained bedridden for three months.

After his release from this second ordeal, Yaseen turned to religion for solace. He immersed himself in the study of Islamic books and began leading prayers and reciting Naats at the local Masjid. It was during this time that he also opened a coaching center in Chadoora. According to his father, Habibullah, the center quickly gained popularity, and Yaseen became deeply involved in its operation. For two years, the center thrived, but peace was elusive. Once again, the police and military began to harass him and disrupted the brief calm that had settled into his life.

In 2002, Yaseen once again took up arms and remained active among the ranks of the Mujahideen for seven months. According to the police, he narrowly escaped a deadly encounter in Nowpora, Chadoora, an event confirmed by his father. Habibullah Ittoo recalls how their home became a frequent target of police raids once Yaseen resumed his resistance activities. The house was searched multiple times, with officers resorting to digging through the floors in a desperate attempt to find evidence. Despite the mounting pressure, Yaseen never wavered or compromised; instead, he grew even more determined.

After his arrest in October 2002, Yaseen was released in June 2004. By then, he had fully embraced a life of piety thereby dedicating himself to preaching in Masajid's. During this period, the Ittoo family established a library in Chadoora, encouraging Yaseen to manage the bookstore attached to it. His brother, Abdur Rashid, recalls, "He worked with us at the shop for about two months. But then, the Rashtriya Rifles camp in Nagam summoned him. We accompanied him to the camp, where he was beaten severely again. Despite the torment, he returned to work at the bookstore."

In March 2005, Yaseen resumed his resistance journey and rejoined his old organization, Hizbul Mujahideen. This time, he was appointed the district commander for Srinagar and Budgam. In December 2005, he narrowly escaped death during a siege in Gulab Daji, Tangmarg, where three of his comrades were martyred, but Yaseen managed to survive.

However, in June 2006, Yaseen and his comrades were arrested in Pampore while traveling in a private vehicle. This marked his third major and overall fifth arrest. He was



detained under the Public Safety Act and transferred to Kot Bhalwal Jail in Jammu. During his imprisonment, a jailbreak incident occurred in which several Pakistani prisoners were martyred, but Yaseen miraculously survived. However, he was falsely accused of being involved in the jailbreak.

In the turbulent year of 2010, Yaseen was released after four long years of imprisonment. However, his newfound freedom was fleeting, as Kashmir erupted in agitation against fake encounters. Just a few months later, on September 27, 2010, Yaseen was arrested once more in Hapatnar, Chrar Sharif, alongside Muslim League leader Syed Muhammad Rafiq Raina. While Raina was quickly transferred to Humhama, Yaseen was taken to the notorious SOG camp in Humhama, where he was kept for one month. During this time, three consecutive Public Safety Acts were slapped on him, and he was also implicated in the murder of Abdul Ghani Bhat, the brother of former Hizbul Mujahideen divisional commander and Salvation Movement chairman Zaffar Akbar Bhat.

In March 2015, after five grueling years in prison, Yaseen Ittoo was finally released. He officially joined the Tehreek-e-Hurriyat and actively participated in its programs. But just nine months later, in December 2015, Yaseen left home for a court hearing in Jammu and never returned.

On January 7, 2016, newspapers suddenly published a statement from Hizbul Mujahideen claiming that Yaseen Ittoo had been martyred in an accident while on a mission near the border. The following day, on January 8, 2016, a funeral prayer in absentia was held for Yaseen in Nagam Chadoora, led by Tehreek-e-Hurriyat General Secretary Muhammad Ashraf Sehrai. His family, too, believed that Yaseen was no more, and a wave of condolences swept through the area.

However, six months later, in June 2016, the Ittoo family was stunned when the Chadoora police summoned Yaseen's brother to the station and revealed that Yaseen was, in fact, alive. The police believed that Yaseen had deliberately spread the news of his death and arranged the funeral prayer in absentia to evade the occupying authorities, while secretly continuing his work as an active commander for Hizbul Mujahideen.

According to the police, Yaseen played a key role in organizing protest rallies in South Kashmir during the 2016 uprising. He even addressed several rallies and, on August 14, 2016, participated in a Pakistan Independence Day march in Redwani, Kulgam. But exactly one year later, on August 14, 2017, Yaseen met his end, laying down his life in the battle he had fought so relentlessly. May Allah elevate the ranks of this great fighter and all Mujahideen who have been martyred while fighting the fascist Indian military in our beloved motherland.

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***"To end, I must tell you all that surrender is a weakness and to fight is the strength. For a Brave Nation, Freedom is the Destination. Honour, not exit is our way. My fingers are on the trigger; however, they do touch the keypads to write for my people. Both ways, I stand for Freedom, Truth, and Justice"***

***Shaheed Dr. Mannan Wani***

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