

An Impassionate, Sensuous And Adventurous  
Autobiography of a Kashmiri Woman

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# A PASSIONATE **JOURNEY**

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I used to tell myself that because I lived in Germany I was privileged to know about my body and had adopted a free lifestyle, most Indian women cannot afford.

Asha Kachru

“

I never thought of Pandu as a poor mason belonging to a lower caste and me being from Brahmin family, not an iota of that thought was in my mind.



Very early in my life I was forced to identify myself with non- Kashmiris living in our neighborhood in Delhi, like many Bengalis, the Madrasis, the Sikhs, the Christians who stayed next to us were my friends, not Kashmiris.

It helped me to think of Kashmiri muslims not as religious entity, but as our neighbours. Unfortunately the sad events of 1990, which made most of my relatives leave the valley, it hurts me today a lot and my wish to go back to my ancestral home in srinagar is very much alive

Of course the Kashmiri pandits always laid a lot of stress on education as a result of which they were offered well placed administrative jobs by the ruling kings, before the British came.

I was keen to get to know my roots, the majestic past during the time of the wise rishis and munis and spiritual women like Lalded (Lalleshwari).

I always followed my own passionate way of life and a single independent socio-politically responsible woman.

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A PASSIONATE\_\_\_\_\_

# JOURNEY

Asha Kachru



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**A PASSIONATE JOURNEY**  
Written by : Asha Kachru

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**DEDICATED TO ALL THE MINOR  
GIRLS IN INDIA**

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# LOVE IS BEST WHEN FREE

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Kamala Das

## Preface

I thank Sanjiv Chandan of Streekaal, Delhi for having motivated me to write about myself. Like a few other friends he is of the view that being so energetic at this mature age of mine of 82 years and possessing so much positive energy, I must share my life experiences with more people. I agree my way of living mostly as a single woman has been rather unusual and I need to share it with the friends who are interested in it.

I always followed my heart. I was not always liked by all but I did what I believed in. I made many mistakes too but Osho's suggestion to follow one's heart and find out one's own truth by making mistakes and learning from them. This suited me well and here I am quite ok at this old age. Of course I had my bouts of depression, not only because there is so much sorrow in the world around.

Once when I took refuge at Osho's campus in Bonn, after I felt totally miserable at the way my brothers and my mother treated me, I was advised by the vice chancellor of the multi-cultural university of Osho, to cut off from my family with immediate effect.

My mother used to call me again and again in the village I was staying in. she would always want me to come and meet her. Being the only daughter she used to miss me and yet when I would reach her place, after a 6 hour drive in my ambassador, one of the first things she would want me to do is to take her to her two sons, also living in Pune. Though they did visit her regularly providing her medicines and spending time with her, but she was too dependent on them emotionally and I used to feel let down because I would come

to her thinking we will have a good time together now and the like.

Also my brothers were not happy with my feminist ways. I was unhappy with them, with the way they used to not let their wives, my bhabhis tell their side of the story and would always dominate. And my mother too would scold me for “interfering” in my brother’s family matters!?

I knew the VC from a seminar on peace in Kashmir organized by an NGO run by Arun Wakhlu in Pune, in which he introduced us to some meditation techniques.

I was shaken by this strong comment of his to leave my family, but it did prove effective in the long run. He had said that unlearning is important in one’s life too.

My passion for music, dance and socio-political debates with like-minded, has given me the energy to sustain. And I like putting on colorful bangles and hanging earrings as well as beautiful necklaces, in spite of my old age. I have a healthy skin and thick hair which I color regularly and I look quite pretty, as I get compliments often too.

Gold ornaments have no importance for me now and have distributed all my ornaments amongst my granddaughters or friends. I care more for aesthetics now. There are beautiful ornaments in stones and pearls or silver and I like to wear them. The same with clothes, I hardly wear saris now, because they are not practical. Freedom of movement is more important. And I don’t anymore worry about what people will say, though I do appreciate and enjoy the compliments I get whenever I wear a sari.

I get many FB messages from both young and old and though mostly I have to block them due to their one sided interests, I sometimes make very deep friendships with mostly young men, who are interested in intelligent women. We share our socio-political experiences and it makes sense for me.

I hope readers will enjoy my likes and dislikes and live a joyous meaningful life.



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## Introduction

### **My family**

I am a Kashmiri woman, born in Anantnag, the city of healing springs of the state of Jammu and Kashmir in North India. My parents came to Delhi much before the exodus of Kashmiri pundits in 1990, not due to Muslim invasion, but due to a personal disaster in their marriage.

My mother was being bereft of her gold and pashmina items given as dowry, by her in laws and it was not possible for my parents to continue in the house, where a stepmother was ruling the family. My grandfather, Boilal, had married again, because his first wife, my father's mother committed suicide. She could not withstand the loss of her younger brother in an accident.

My second grandmother, Boilal's second wife Kamalaji, was not to my mother's liking and my mother telling me sad stories of how her golden ornaments and pashmina saris were vanishing and she could not do anything. In those times the daughters in law had to keep their heads covered in veil and not talk to other men in house.

My father was a weakling to take any action and when he once asked for advice my mother's elder brother, Babuji, who had married mother off, he suggested to my father to not file a case against the in law family and instead to try his luck in Delhi.

My mother was young when married. Her telling me how her book was torn and thrown away when she was studying in third class, with the argument what is the use of studying when she has to do her household duties as a married woman, indicates the gender discrimination she had to suffer from, early in life. Her elder brother Babuji, was very protective about her and though he had English