



# Choosing Between Terrorism And Tourism

**Maulana Wahiduddin Khan**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated a 9.2-km tunnel between Chenani and Nashri in Jammu & Kashmir on April 1, 2017. This road tunnel is India's longest and will reduce driving time between Jammu and Srinagar by two hours. Speaking at Battla Ballian town in Udhampur district, Modi said that the youth of Kashmir must choose between terrorism and tourism.

With Kashmir ranked as India's premier tourist destination there are enormous opportunities for the tourist industry here, but its development has been hampered by violent activism of Kashmiris. A flourishing tourism industry in Kashmir Valley will greatly benefit Kashmiri people. Given this situation, launching a movement that is essentially anti-tourist will amount to self-destruction.

The above advice is applicable not only to the state of Jammu & Kashmir, but to the entire country. We are living in an age

of 'opportunity explosion'. If, in Kashmir, opportunities present themselves in terms of tourism, such opportunities also exist in other states in different forms. Therefore, every individual needs to base his activities on opportunities rather than on protests and complaints.

India's Muslims often speak out against discrimination, but this movement of theirs has not yielded even one person of the likes of APJ Abdul Kalam. Similarly, Dalit leaders have initiated a movement for putting an end to discrimination against Dalits, yet they have not produced even one person of the stature of BR Ambedkar.

These facts are a wake-up call to rethink our position. Now it is time for all communities to centre their activities on availing of the numerous opportunities open to them rather than on voicing grievances.

The Sikh community started a

movement for separation in Punjab, which reached its zenith in the 1970s and 1980s. But, after some years, they realised that their movement was futile. Although the Sikhs are a regional community in India, by availing of modern opportunities they have extended their enterprises all over the country. That is why they have no need for separatism. Today, we are living in an age of outsourcing, that is, while residing in a particular area, a community can engage in business with the entire country or even the entire world. In this situation, seeking separatism is anachronistic in spirit.

The concept of separate state has become obsolete in today's age. We are now living in a global village. People have access to communication facilities and enjoy the freedom to prosper through peaceful activity.

In today's circumstances, education is of maximum importance. Every commu-

nity has the responsibility of educating its next generation, for education is the master-key which will open all closed doors. That is why every person must make receiving a high standard of education his primary concern. In terms of education, Kashmir is a backward region. India itself ranks low in education when measured by international standards, as no Indian university finds a place among the top universities of the world.

Present-day activists are engaged in granting favours to people of their respective communities. History bears witness to the fact that no community has ever progressed through favour. As Arnold Toynbee has shown after in-depth research, the secret of progress for a community is in overcoming challenges. The leaders of every community must prepare their people to go forward by meeting challenges. The road to success is one of surmounting challenges.

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